

MARK RUSSO

2018 Teacher of the Year

For his excellence in teaching, as well as his innovative contributions to golf instruction, Mark Russo is the 2018 Teacher of the Year. Mark has served on the Northern Chapter Board since 2013, and is currently the Vice President. Along with his duties on the Northern Chapter Board and the Section Board, Mark has contributed to the MAPGA through the Education Committee, serving as the Teaching Sub-Committee Chair for two years, and presenting at numerous education events on teaching and coaching. He was also the Chair of the 2016 and 2017 MAPGA Teaching Summits, and is currently the Section Education Committee Co-Chair.

Mark has steadily built a reputation as an instructor who produces results for his students through a unique blend of data, instinct and communication. Mark invests significant time and resources toward professional development, resulting in a dramatic increase in his own abilities as a teacher and measurable improvement for his students. He spends time with some of the best teachers and coaches in the game today, including Andrew Rice, Michael Breed, Ryan Chaney, Martin Chuck, Sean Foley, Steve WenPetren, Mike Adams, Bernie Najar, Cameron McCormick, Chuck Cook, Martin Hall, Rick Krebs, and many more. His goal is to learn from these great instructors and bring that knowledge back to the lesson tee for the benefit of his students. Mixed with his own beliefs on the golf swing and short game, Mark uses these experiences to mold his own teaching style and become a better communicator and a more caring coach.

In addition to his regular coaching programs, Mark mixes in special events and lesson rates, such as “TrackMan Friday Nights” (group instruction), “Wedgucation” (Titleist wedge fittings & technique), “Golf & Grapes” (ladies evening clinic & wine tasting), and American Heroes Day (discounted rates for active military, police, and fire fighters). These serve to broaden his reach in the region and create excitement among new and experienced golfers. He also remains active in the PGA, coordinating two consecutive Section Teaching Summits and regularly attending Section and National teaching conferences.

Mark first entered the golf industry in 1997 as an assistant professional at Marlborough Country Club. Shortly after, he accepted the assistant professional position for a brief stay at Turf Valley Resort, only to return to Marlborough Country Club as head professional. In 2002, Mark assumed the first assistant professional position at The Country Club at Woodmore, and was promoted to head professional in 2006. In March of 2012, he founded MR Golf Instruction at Night Hawk Golf Center and has been working as a self-employed teaching professional ever since.

A member of the PGA of America since 2005, Mark was ranked by *Golf Digest* in Maryland on the 2017-18 “Best by State Teachers” list. In addition, he is a TrackMan owner and Certified Professional, a TPI Level 2 Golf Professional, and was one of the first ever BodiTrak Ground Mechanics Certified Professionals. Since 2006, Mark has been a proud Titleist Staff Member and Certified Fitter.

Mark was born on July 15, 1976 to parents Ron and Bobby Russo. His father, a retired Navy commander, introduced Mark to baseball and ice hockey early in life, the latter of which became his passion. Mark travelled the East Coast with his mother as a member of the Bowie Hockey

Club, as well as through four years of varsity hockey at DeMatha Catholic High School. He then went to Towson University, where he graduated with Bachelors in Mass Communication and played hockey for the Tigers.

Mark is lucky to have been married to his high school sweetheart, Lori, for 17 years. They met as teenagers in 1994 and have been together ever since. In October 2011, Mark & Lori were blessed with a son, Blaine; and in March 2016, the family welcomed another son, Quinn. Mark is a lifelong resident of Maryland, and a proud graduate of DeMatha Catholic High School and Towson University.

Mark would like to dedicate this award to his parents, without whom none of this would be possible.