

## ***YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AWARD***

*This award bestows special recognition on a PGA Professional who is a leader in junior golf, reflects the image and qualities that juniors can emulate, and provides opportunities for juniors to learn and play golf.*

***Michael Pius, PGA***

*Formerly The First Tee of Washington D.C.*

*Washington, D.C.*

For his involvement with the MAPGA Junior Golf Committee and his presentations the past three years at the East Coast Junior Golf Summit; as well as his involvement in various First Tee programs such as The Life Skills and Leadership Academy, College Golf Prep Academy and The DRIVE program, Michael Pius has exhibited the leadership and innovation to be named the recipient of the 2017 Youth Player Development Award.

Michael Pius was born on July 24, 1983 in Virginia Beach, Virginia to parents Joseph and Patricia Pius. Michael's family, that also includes sister Katherine, is incredibly close knit and they were very active in their local community and participated in local sports organizations. Michael began playing golf at the age of 14 after a neighbor introduced him to the game in 1997 at Herndon Centennial Golf Course. His Great Grandfather and Grandfather both worked at Piping Rock Golf Club in Locust Valley, New York, and his Grandfather bought Michael his first set of clubs, and would practice in the front yard when he would visit. Golf has become a multi-generational activity that Michael is now sharing with his two sons.

Michael's first golf related job was at Fairfax National Golf Club in Fairfax, Virginia when he was 15 years old. Michael worked there for one season and then worked at Hidden Creek Country Club in Reston, Virginia for four years before attending Penn State University. At Penn State, he earned his Bachelor's degree in Recreation and Parks Management with a concentration in PGA Golf Management and was elected to his PGA membership in 2008. He then went on to earn his Masters in Sport and Leisure Service Management with a concentration in Sports Management from University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2010.

Michael has been a member of the MAPGA Junior Golf Committee since 2012 and has strived to strengthen the section's junior golf programs by drawing upon the strong relationships with his counterparts in the various chapters of The First Tee and fellow PGA Professionals across his Chapter, Section and the U.S.

Michael enjoys promoting all of the PGA of America National Youth Golf Programs as a part of his programming with The First Tee of Greater Washington, DC. He has had many of his students participate in the Drive, Chip & Putt qualifiers on a local, sub-regional and even the regional level. In 2016, The First Tee of Greater Washington, DC had three female students qualify for the sub-regional at River Bend Country Club with one qualifying for the Regional at Baltusrol! He is very excited to

continue to focus on building a strong base of female golfers out of The First Tee program. He coordinated the Chapter's first involvement in the PGA's Junior Golf League with Ft. Belvoir Golf Club in 2014 and has expanded the program in 2015 and 2016. This year, Michael had two teams participate in the Spring/Summer League and now three will participate in the MAPGA Fall League. He continues to find ways for The First Tee Program and PGA Programs to benefit each other and to contribute to growing the game.

This year, The First Tee of Greater Washington, DC again teamed up with the GolfDC Facilities for the 2016 NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo. During this collaboration, The First Tee was able to impact the lives of over 500 children throughout their weekend sessions. While working together, the different organizations were able to give free 10 minute lessons and promote junior golf and golf overall at the GolfDC Locations.

During his time at The First Tee, Michael has been able to increase the number of youth receiving golf instruction. Michael now oversees The First Tee's National School Program (NSP) in Washington, DC and Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. In 2016 this program will have impacted the lives of over 82,000 students in 149 schools including 73 Washington, DC Public Schools, ten DC Public Charter Schools, 27 Fairfax County Public Schools, 10 Arlington County Public Schools, 27 Loudoun County Schools and two Private Catholic Schools in Northern Virginia. This is a very important program to help introduce not only the game of golf to our youth, but the inherent life skills and core values that are taught through the game of golf like honesty, sportsmanship and confidence that will help to ultimately create better citizens.

Michael was selected to become a The First Tee National DRIVE Trainer. He has spent 2015 & 2016 traveling the entire East Coast training staff members at Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA's, Recreation Centers and Middle School PE Teachers to teach The First Tee DRIVE Program to the youth they impact during and after-school. This is the future of Youth Golf in Middle Schools and after-school care facilities and Michael is excited to be a part of and expand this program into the future all over the country.

Michael is interested in engaging PGA Professionals to promote and develop junior golf programs. He collaborated with former PGA Head Professional of Ft. Belvoir Golf Courses, Steve Greiner in spring 2012 to establish The First Tee golf course program at Ft. Belvoir. This collaboration has been very successful and now boasts six full classes each week in the fall. Michael has now worked with Tommy Smith, PGA, Adam Harrell, PGA, and Scott Davis, PGA Apprentice to bring The First Tee programming to their facilities. Due to his successes at The First Tee of Greater Washington DC, Michael was recently selected to be the Executive Director of The First Tee of the Upstate (SC).

Michael has been married to Marie (Walsh) for seven years. Marie and Michael met during their junior year of high school at Paul VI in Fairfax, Virginia. They have two sons, Noah Joseph Pius (3 years) and Patrick Michael Pius (3 months).