

ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

This award bestows special recognition on an assistant professional who, through a commitment to improving opportunities for assistants, has distinguished himself/herself in service to the Section, his/her peers and facility.

MATTHEW SCHULZE – Country Club of Virginia

Born in Oak Lawn, Illinois on July 22, 1972, Matthew Schulze has been assistant professional at the Country Club of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia since 1998. Robert Schulze, Matthew's father, was a high school golf coach, so his mother, Mary, brothers Robb and Jonathan, and sister, also named Mary, have had golf as an integral part of their family life for as long as Matthew can remember. Matthew started making golf pay off for him by picking up range balls when he was 14 years old. Even though he is left handed, he learned to hit the golf ball right-handed in the family's back yard. His brother got the first set of clubs, so Matthew had to use the right-handed set of clubs that belonged to his Dad. Matthew played on his high school golf team, which won the conference title three times in four years.

Matthew was awarded a full scholarship to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, where he was a Business major, and served as captain of the golf team. In 1994, he turned professional and accepted an assistant professional position at Brown County Golf Club in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he remained until 1995. During this time Matthew met and married his wife, Lucie. Matthew served as an assistant professional at Columbian Country Club from 1995 to 1996 and Northwood Country Club from 1996 to 1998, both in Dallas, Texas. In 1999, he was elected to PGA membership.

In the early years of his career, Matthew was not exposed to an Assistant's Association. When his career brought him to the Middle Atlantic Section, his Head PGA Professional, Paul Michaelian, encouraged him to be a part of the Middle Atlantic Assistant Professional Association (APA). He became a member and at the end of the first year received a telephone call from Tommy Smith, then President of the APA, who informed him that he had been awarded an MAPGA/APA Golf Professional Training Program Scholarship. Tommy invited him to become a part of the planning for the following year. Through Tommy and Chris Kenney, also past President of the APA, Matthew became the point-of-contact for the APA in the Southern Chapter. This past fall, Matthew was elected to serve the Section as A-8 Director. Since then, along with Chris Kenney and Tommy Smith, Matthew has strived to reach their mutual goal of bettering their Association until it becomes "the best Assistant Professional Association in the PGA."

Summer Lee, the current Head PGA Professional at the Country Club of Virginia had this to say about Matthew. *"I began working with Matthew nine months ago and was immediately impressed by his intense personal drive to improve his ability as a PGA Professional. He is dedicated to continually improving, which is evident by his desire to experience something new every day. Since my arrival, Matthew has been open to new ideas and to a different method of operation. Many professionals look at change as something to fear, Matthew saw these changes as an opportunity to learn."*