

EARLE HELLEN SPORTS MEDIA AWARD

This award bestows special recognition on an outstanding member of the media who best exemplifies a commitment and service to golf and sport reporting, and who demonstrates the same genuine appreciation for the role of the PGA professional as was demonstrated by the late Earle Hellen (formerly of the Newport News Newspapers).

Jonathan Westman

Editor, *Delmarva Golf the Magazine*
Vice President, Coastal Multimedia

After realizing his athletic talents weren't going to earn him a professional contract, Jonathan Westman began writing about sports – saying that if he couldn't play a game for a living, he wanted to be a part of bringing one to others. He interned at his hometown newspaper, *The Evening Observer*, while attending Fredonia State University College, and following graduation, he accepted a full-time position at the daily publication. Jonathan covered a variety of topics, including local government and the police beat during his time there.

When Jonathan moved to Ocean City, MD. in April of 1999, he really wasn't familiar with the impact the game of golf played in the resort market. After all, when moving to the East Coast from Dunkirk, NY, located 30 miles south of Buffalo, some would say it is understandable why golf wasn't immediately on his mind. Snow typically flies there by Halloween and Old Man Winter sometimes hangs around until May, making the golf season a particularly short one. Friends often kid him now, asking how people from Western New York play a sport that requires hitting a small white ball across a snow-covered field.

Jonathan quickly warmed up to golf's impact on the Eastern Shore. As the copy editor for *The Maryland Times Press*, a weekly newspaper in Ocean City, Jonathan wanted to become more involved in the publication. He convinced his boss to give him the title of sports editor. The position came without financial incentive -- and one other small problem -- the paper didn't have a sports section!

Although he developed a comprehensive sports section for the newspaper, he recognized that golf was the sport that demanded the most attention. Jonathan helped to create *Tee to Green*, a weekly golf section that appeared in the 17 locally owned company publications and continues to be published today. At about the time Jonathan was promoted to editor-in-chief of *The Maryland Times Press*, corporate officials determined that the success of *Tee to Green* could be capitalized upon, and asked him to simultaneously edit *Golf First Magazine*, a new monthly publication focusing on local golf. In the fall of 2000, he won Best Sports Column honors presented by The Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Press Association for his in-depth examination of the Middle Atlantic Section's Bob Baldassari and his fund-raising efforts through the 100 Holes of Golf campaign. When a multitude of corporate decisions doomed *Golf First* after 15 issues, Jonathan and Grant L. Gursky, the paper's chief photographer, told their bosses they would be leaving the paper. "*We knew we had the talent, the know-how and the desire to continue producing a golf magazine. The area needed and deserved it,*" Jonathan said.

Delmarva Golf The Magazine evolved from that desire, debuting in March of 2000. Westman and Gursky teamed to produce a monthly golf product that provides engaging coverage of the game on a local and regional level. Today, the publication has a peak circulation of 35,000 and is distributed in five states. *Delmarva Golf The Magazine*, which has subscribers from as far as Michigan and Florida, is published with the cooperation of the Middle Atlantic Section of The PGA and the Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Through Baldassari, Jonathan has become an advocate of emphasizing the credentials of PGA golf professional's vs "other" golf professionals. On every occasion in print or on the web, that a professional is mentioned, he makes sure to include the initials "PGA" after the individual's name. Just as any trained and certified professional, from doctor to accountant, Jonathan feels the hard work and dedication associated with achieving PGA membership should be recognized. "*I have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for members of The PGA and the Middle Atlantic Section,*" Jonathan said. "*I have*

been blessed to have come in contact with so many people who selflessly give of themselves, not for recognition, but because they truly love what they are doing – helping to grow the game of golf.”

The Middle Atlantic PGA Section has been predominantly featured in *Delmarva Golf The Magazine* through stories highlighting charitable campaigns, junior golf and regional tournaments. An entire Web site section devoted to the MAPGA appears at *DelmarvaGolf.com*, the online home of *Delmarva Golf The Magazine*. The Section was also featured on *The Delmarva Golf Show*, a fast-paced, 30-minute television program hosted by Westman and Baldassari, and produced by Gursky.

Jonathan credits the constant love and support of his family as being the biggest influence in his life. His father, Sheldon, and mother, Pamela, have provided a lifetime’s worth of encouragement, guidance and advice to their oldest son. Jonathan’s sisters, Marjorie and Stefanie, have always been there for him, day or night, regardless of the situation. And had it not been for his brother Jarred, who temporarily put his own career on hold and moved to Ocean City to serve as the marketing arm for the company, Jonathan’s growing business wouldn’t have survived its infant stages. *“Every new business has ups and downs. My family has been there through every one of them – even when I have made the wrong decision,”* Jonathan said. *“They mean everything to me. I am very lucky to have them in my life.”*

Jonathan’s family has been extended to those he works with daily. His co-workers have become companions and he cherishes the relationships he has formed with the Gurskys, the Baldassaris, staff photographer Stephen Cherry and the rest of his team. In addition to publishing *Delmarva Golf The Magazine*, their company, Coastal Multimedia, provides innovative marketing solutions for businesses through Web site design and hosting, television production, photography, and graphic design services. *“It is a tremendous honor to have been selected as this year’s recipient of this prestigious award,”* Jonathan said. *“It is a privilege to report the Middle Atlantic Section’s efforts and accomplishments. I would not have been able to receive this recognition if it weren’t for the continuous support of my family, friends and co-workers. This is truly a team award in every sense of the word — I can’t say enough about the talented team of professionals I am lucky enough to work with daily.”* The MAPGA is proud to have Jonathon Westman on their team and salutes him as the recipient of the 2002 Earle Hellen Sports Media Award.