

*2019 Youth Player Development Award*

**Eric Layton**

Eric Layton was selected as the recipient of the 2019 Youth Player Development Award for his contributions to growing Junior League Golf initiatives within the Section, as well as growing the after-school program at the Country Club of Virginia and being a valuable resource to his fellow PGA Professionals.

Eric Layton was born May 4, 1979 in Johnstown, Pa. to parents Jim and JoEtta and is joined by two brothers, Jim and Patrick. He started playing golf when he was 13 years old, after seeing his brother start to enjoy the sport. His first golf related job was as a cart attendant at Windber Country Club in Salix, Pa. Eric graduated Cum Laude from Methodist College's Professional Golf Management Program in 2003 and accepted an assistant professional position at Rolling Rock Club in Ligonier, Pa.

After a brief stay at Rolling Rock, Eric made his way to the Middle Atlantic Section as an assistant for 2018 MAPGA Professional of the Year Rob McNamara at Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville, Va. Eric credits McNamara as being his mentor as well as many other outstanding PGA Professionals such as Carl Irvin, Chip Swanson, Richard Cromwell and Warren West. In 2007, Eric was elected to membership and accepted the Head Professional position at The Country Club of Virginia where he served for seven years before becoming the Director of Instruction, a role he still fills today.

Eric has been a leader in junior golf for many years and the programs he has helped create have been an example in the Richmond area and beyond. Since taking over the after-school program at the Country Club of Virginia (CCV) in 2007, it has grown from roughly 30 kids to over 150. Eric is considered an expert in junior golf and has been a resource for many facilities over the years. He's written articles and best practices on junior golf and PGA Junior League for multiple publications and has been a featured presenter at The East Coast Junior Golf Summit.

Eric has been at CCV for 11 years and has seen the junior golf program grow tremendously. The CCV PGA Junior League program has been one of the largest at any single facility in the Middle Atlantic Section with more than 75 kids participating each spring and fall. In the early days of the program, Eric was instrumental in organizing the Richmond leagues, and worked closely with former PGA Junior League Regional Manager Mike Aldrich to be a resource for other facilities and PGA Professionals.

When PGA Junior League first started, Eric and the team at CCV were on board from the very beginning and the program rapidly grew to over 60 kids, but noticeably not many girls were participating. Eric made a call to several mothers and with the assistance of Head Professional Summer Lee, put together a plan for a team of all girls. The response was outstanding and soon CCV had two teams of all girls. With the growth of the program, CCV became their own league and eventually hosted the first ever "all-girls" PGA Junior League Match. Eric was lucky enough to be able to write part of the cover story for the November 2015 PGA Magazine article on the girl's program which is still thriving today.

In addition to the "all-girls" PGA Junior League team, CCV also hosts "all-girls" programs for Operation 36, a new coaching program which Eric was instrumental in bringing to CCV. When the facility decided to revamp an already thriving after school program, Eric knew this would be an opportunity to expand an

offering that currently focused on beginner golfers ages 7-10. The after-school program last year had approximately 60 kids outside of PGA Jr League, but Eric and the team decided to offer programs for younger (age 3-4), all girls, and high school competitive players. The response was outstanding with over 150 kids participating in the first semester!

Outside of PGA Junior League, the facility has gone from three clinics per week and four tournaments per year, to 155 kids per week and 16 tournaments a year. The program has provided an avenue for kids of all ability levels to grow and learn to love the game. Eric has worked hard to develop the trust of the students and parents and credits them, along with the dedication of the entire professional staff, for the success of the program. The CCV junior golf program is now consistently producing college golfers including two Division-1 players in the class of 2018.

As Director of Instruction, Eric oversees a teaching team of eight PGA Professionals and Associates. Each year, CCV hires 2-3 PGM interns to assist with the programs, and Eric takes the mentorship of these professionals very seriously. His philosophy in life is to be humble and treat people the way you want to be treated. His golf philosophy is to bring the best out of each one of his students by fostering a relationship built on trust, so they know he always has their best interest at heart. Eric feels blessed to have worked with outstanding professionals throughout his career, and knows nothing can be accomplished without the shared commitment of an outstanding team.

Eric and his wife Rebecca have been married for 15 years and enjoy spending time with their four children Emmalee (age 14), Andrew (age 12), Libby (age 7) and Anna (age 5).