

**Andrew J. Blair**

*Virginia State Golf Association, Midlothian, Virginia*

Andrew Blair was born in Akron, Ohio, on Oct. 9, 1971 (during the World Series) to Cary and Karen Blair. He was introduced to the game by his father, a retired insurance executive and mother, a retired schoolteacher. He has one sister, Kristen Mulholland, who is an executive at Cincinnati, Ohio based Johnson & Johnson.

At a young age, Andrew got hooked on golf through his father, who while the family was living in San Diego, California, would allow him to go to the beach and hit whiffle balls into the expansive Pacific. His interest in the game was also nurtured by his grandfather, Harold "Curly" Bergstrom of Rockford, Illinois. Today, Andrew's father and mother are still good players.

Upon returning to Ohio, Andrew grew up playing at a hidden gem called Westfield Group Country Club, which would later become the home for the Westfield Junior PGA Championship during some of the event's best years. He graduated from Ashland (Ohio) University with a Bachelor of Science in Sports Communications in 1994 and received his Master's Degree in Sports Management from the University of Richmond in 1996. After an internship at Orlando-based RDV Sports, Andrew was hired as the Assistant Sports Information Director at the University of Richmond; little did Andrew know that this would lead to his "big break" into the golf industry.

While flying home from Albany, NY on a business trip for one of the athletic teams that Andrew was covering, he had a stop-over in Philadelphia. During the wait for his connecting flight, a complete stranger sat down next to him and the two began a friendly conversation about golf.

"What are your goals?" he asked. "Well," Andrew said, "someday I'd like to get into the golf business. It's a tough industry to crack." The flight was called. The stranger stood up and they shook hands. "Well, friend, I'm David Norman, the Executive Director of the Virginia State Golf Association. Send me your resume."

Six months later, Andrew was hired as the Communications Manager for the VSGA, starting the position in April, 2001. Andrew has since handled all communications for the Association and is editor of the *Virginia Golfer* magazine, which has improved markedly since his arrival. The publication covers the people, places and events that comprise the game of golf in Virginia and beyond. The periodical has assembled some of the commonwealth's finest writers. Andrew credits the success of the magazine to the publication's writers and photographers, along with his co-workers and colleagues, led by VSGA Executive Director Jamie Conkling. This has allowed the VSGA to achieve many of its goals from a communications standpoint. He was promoted to Director of Communications in the fall of 2006.

In addition to bringing light to the accomplishments of some of the commonwealth's top amateurs and PGA professionals, under Andrew's direction the publication has featured interviews with the game's greatest figures and personalities. In addition to interviewing the current PGA of America CEO Joe Steranka, *Virginia Golfer* has also featured interviews with the likes of Pete Dye, Curtis Strange, Lanny and Bobby Wadkins, David B. Fay, David Feherty, Judy Rankin, Wynsol Spencer, Vinny Giles, Chandler Harper, Dottie Pepper, Tom Fazio, Bill Goodwin, Carolyn Bivens and Arnold Palmer.

Andrew is also the content-provider for the VSGA's Web site, [www.vsga.org](http://www.vsga.org), and files a story after every round of each VSGA championship. A talented writer, Andrew has written about Tiger Woods and

Lorena Ochoa for the United States Golf Association, has covered the U.S. Open, as well as last year's LPGA Championship. Through it all, Andrew's motto has been "tell the truth and show grace."

"It's hard *not* to succeed when you have an all-star staff, all-star volunteers and terrific writers and photographers around you," Andrew says, noting that he has been helped tremendously by *Virginia Golfer* Editorial Committee Chairmen Tim Finnegan and Bill Millsaps during his time.

In addition to counting his parents and sister as role models, Andrew credits his pastors, Chris Price, Christy Huffman, Tom Bosserman and Mark England with having the greatest influence in his life. He's actively involved at Epiphany Lutheran Church in a variety of volunteer activities and he notes that his friends there have helped make this award possible. Andrew resides in Glen Allen, Virginia.