

John Lyberger, PGA
Congressional Country Club, Bethesda, Maryland

John's parents, Jack (now deceased) and Dolores, are avid golfers and members at Windber Country Club in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. At the age of eight, John would drag a 7-iron and a putter behind him on the golf course as he walked the fairways with his parents. He would typically make it through to the 7th hole before becoming exhausted. That green was near the Clubhouse so his dad would give him a dollar and John would get a soda and a pack of crackers and sit on a bench outside the golf shop to wait for his parents to finish the last two holes. John asked questions of any adult who happened to be near. He realizes now that he was probably driving them crazy with all of his questions, but he learned so much talking to Gump Polansky, Spooky (local bookie), assistant professional Mooter, and others.

When he was twelve, John got his first job at the course picking the driving range. Being too young to drive the golf car attached to the gang picker, he walked the perimeter of the range and hit balls to the middle using his trusted 7-iron until all the balls were in the center. He used a shag bag plunger to pick up the balls and put them into baskets; he then carried the baskets to the cleaning area, put 75 clean balls into drawstring canvas bags, and lined them up for head professional Dick "Rocket" Roberage to count. John was paid 50 cents for every bag of picked and cleaned balls; some evenings he earned \$20...not bad for a night's work at age twelve.

Dick Roberage left for another position when John was sixteen and the club management asked John to run the golf shop for the season. It was an awesome experience setting up tournaments, collecting scores for handicaps, fixing broken golf carts, filling soda machines, along with ordering and selling shop merchandise. John decided that summer that golf was to be his chosen profession.

John earned the title of Greater Johnstown Area Junior Champion, won four junior club championships, is a George F. Wheeling Scholastic Invitational champion (36-hole medal-play high school golf tournament composed of four-player teams and a handful of individual invitees competing for team and individual titles), and was the Captain of his high school golf team three out of four years. He received a Bachelor's degree in Marketing with an emphasis in Professional Golf Management from Ferris State University in 1987 and was elected to PGA membership in 1991. He is also a member of The Club Managers Association of America and is one step away from his Certified Club Manager (CCM) designation.

John interned at Congressional Country Club in 1985 and 1986, then worked as an assistant there from 1987 to 1993. He was then selected to be the Head PGA Professional at Westwinds Golf Club in New Market, Maryland, where he worked for three years. In January of 1996, he returned to Congressional Country Club as their Head PGA Professional and was later named their PGA Director of Golf. John has also received the MAPGA's 1999 Merchandiser of the Year Award in the Private Course Category.

Setting standards is an important part of a PGA Professional's overall responsibilities and superior customer service is vital to John's operation. His staff forges ahead from two cornerstones: committed excellence and service with distinction. John attempts to utilize

knowledgeable personnel in every position. Congressional Country Club's reputation is built on service – and customer service is John's first and last consideration.

His training program begins with each and every staff member understanding the importance of maximum output. John sets standards and raises the bar each year. The staff has weekly meetings to share information and ideas. At the end of each meeting, they have a Q & A session to ensure everyone is on the same page and working from the same knowledge base. This helps train the new staff and sharpen the skills of the seasoned veterans. They attend local hard and soft goods seminars and product presentations to continually be on top of the ever-changing technology. Keeping an educated and well trained staff pays enormous dividends in membership satisfaction as well as sales.

John is most proud of his three daughters: Amanda, age fourteen; Jaclyn, age eleven; and Holly, age eight. All are involved in sports such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, softball, and gymnastics. In his spare time John enjoys bass fishing. He also claims he bleeds black and gold, as he is an avid Pittsburgh Steelers fan.