

Bernard Najar, PGA
Caves Valley Golf Club
Owings Mills, Maryland

A dedication to instruction and to supporting the Middle Atlantic PGA is the trait that stands-out for Bernie Najar as the 2014 Teacher of the Year. Whether it's attending an educational seminar in the Section or on a national scale, or hosting an educational seminar at Caves Valley, Bernie has truly set an example for other instructors to follow.

Bernie was born December 31, 1971 in Bethesda, Maryland to Andre and Bernadette Najar. Growing up in a large family with siblings Cathy, Isabelle, Helene, Carolyn, Valerie, and Kenny made it easy for him to feel comfortable doing things on his own. Bernie grew up playing a great deal of tennis along with other sports before playing golf. His father was a tremendous tennis player; playing on the Egyptian Davis Cup Team in 1946 and at Wimbledon in 1948.

Bernie began playing golf at age 13 when he skipped tennis camp to attend his first junior golf clinic at Kenwood Country Club with Head PGA Professional Rod Thompson. Rod's junior clinics made Bernie's introduction to golf a fun experience. The thrill of playing a new sport and the challenge of hitting the ball to a distant target encouraged him to play more.

Bernie caddied at Bethesda Country Club under the tutelage of Jim Folks, PGA and worked at Las Vegas Golf and Tennis during his senior year at Walt Whitman High School. He was selected to the All-Metropolitan Golf Team in 1988-1990. After his high school graduation in 1990, Bernie attended The American University on a golf scholarship and graduated in 1994 with a BSBA degree in Finance.

In 1994, Bernie went to work at The Suburban Club of Baltimore County in Pikesville, Maryland. A year later, he was hired by The Staples Corporation to teach PGA Professional Charlie Staples' son, Whit Staples, full-time in Florida. During the summer, when Whit was traveling to tournaments, Bernie taught lessons at Montclair Golf, Tennis, and Swim Club in Montclair, Virginia. In the Spring of 1996, Bernie joined the staff at Woodholme Country Club in Baltimore, Maryland as a teaching professional. He completed The PGA's Golf Professional Training Program in 1998, at which time he was elected to PGA membership. In 2012, Bernie moved his teaching talents from Woodholme to Caves Valley Golf Club in Owings Mills, Maryland where he continues to teach today.

The 2014 Teacher of the Year award is Bernie's fourth award received from the Middle Atlantic PGA and his second Teacher of the Year award (first was in 2004). He was a back-to-back Horton Smith Award winner in 2011 and 2012 and was only the second person in MAPGA history to achieve this honor. The first was Rick Miller, PGA in 1992 and 1993. Since 2000, Bernie has been recognized by Golf Digest in their "Best Teachers in State" listing, and since 2007, listed in Golf Magazine as "Top Teacher in the Region." He has been a speaker at the MAPGA Teaching Summit on Advanced Teaching Techniques and also launched his own website, www.parsavers.com.

Over his 20 years as a golf professional, Bernie has invested in a great deal of continuing education and has several specialty certifications that include: TPI's Junior Coaching (Level 2), Jim Hardy's Plane Truth Instructor Program (Level 3), AimPoint (Level 2), Mike Adams and E.A. Tischler's BioSwing Dynamics and the Certified Golf Coaches program with Dr. Rick Jenson and Henry Brunton. From the many events he has attended to improve his skills as a PGA Professional, he has developed a passion to help his peers by presenting and chairing 18 events in the MAPGA since 2003.

Bernie's success as a PGA Professional is a result of loving his job and being self-motivated to develop and improve his skills as a teacher and as a player. He loves learning new skills and has been very fortunate to learn from some of the best players, teachers, fitness experts, and business owners in the golf industry. In addition, Bernie's wife Susan, and the members at Caves Valley have been extremely supportive of his work as a PGA Professional. Bernie's always thinking about how he can make his business run more efficiently. He loves learning and implementing the latest technology into his instruction program to help his students learn with greater ease.

Bernie and Susan have been married for over ten years and have three dogs that they love very much, Emma, Maggie and Elvis. He has been very helpful in sharing his teaching talents with his fellow members. Whether at official seminars or Teaching Summits, or just offering informal advice on the phone, Bernie really believes in education. In his field of expertise, Golf Instruction, he always finds something to learn and to share.