

PGA PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AWARD

This award bestows special recognition on a PGA Professional for exemplary contributions and achievements in the area of Player Development and for extraordinary efforts in conducting and/or supporting Play Golf America initiatives. This award considers the PGA Professional's growth of the game leadership commitment at the Section and National levels, plus the impact made at his/her own facility.

Jim Estes, PGA
Olney Golf Park
Olney, Maryland

Jim Estes is a pioneer and mentor in the adaptive golf arena, and PGA professionals are using his adaptive curriculum in group settings and private coaching programs nationwide. To date, Jim has introduced more than 5,000 post- 9/11 veterans and their family members to the game of golf—a game many of these individuals would have never had access to. Since its founding, the SMGA has provided, free of charge, more than 2500 custom-fitted club sets to wounded veterans, and through a lifetime membership program, offers veterans five maintenance golf lessons per year with PGA professionals.

Jim Estes was born August 12, 1964 in Washington D.C to parents Dr. James and Rosemary Estes and has one sister, Cheryl. He was first introduced to the game at the age of 7 by his father with a set of Sam Snead Young Champs. Seeing the bond that his dad and grandfather shared through the game kept him in the game, and he began to compete with a friend in the neighborhood, seeing who could hit closest to different trees in the neighbor's yards. His first golf related job in 1978 was at Burning Tree Club as a caddie where he had the honor of working with Past PGA of America President Max Elbin. Jim went to college at University of Maryland where he studied Economics. He then turned pro in 1988 and was elected to PGA Membership in 1993.

Jim Estes began his professional career at Bonnie View CC in 1991 as an Assistant Pro for Jeff Sprague, during his time there he was the 1991 Assistants Champ. Jim then moved to Evanston Golf Club and served as the Assistant Pro under Illinois PGA Hall of Fame Member Hal Member from 1992-1995. During his time there he earned honors as the 1994 Assistants Champ, 1995 Illinois PGA Player of the Year, and the 1995 PGA National Player of the Year. From 1996-2000 Jim played on the Nike Tour and PGA Tour, winning the Inland Empire on the Nike Tour and becoming a PGA Tour member in 1998. After his time playing on tour Jim become the Director of Instruction at Olney, Golf Park from 2001-2012. During that time, Jim was recognized as Golf Magazines 2008 Innovator of the Year, in that same year he received the President's Award and was recognized as the MAPGA Player of the Year. In 2013, Jim became the Owner/ Operator of Jim Estes Golf and has continued that through present. From 2008 to present Jim has been awarded the GRAA Growth of the Game Award and was on the Golf Digest list of Best Teachers in Maryland in 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2019. He is ranked 6th in the state of Maryland for 2019-2020 by Golf Digest.

Jim's teaching philosophy encompasses a holistic approach that focuses on improvement of performance by addressing such factors such as a physical assessment, a skills assessment, mental approach, and course management. Jim believes that a player should swing according to their body type rather than fighting natural tendencies. He identifies the source of an individual's physical power and consistency based on each body type and identifies physical limitations. He can then provide instruction on how to improve elements of strength and flexibility that allow the mechanics of the golf swing to be applied more easily. Jim's goal is to motivate each student to get results on the course. He has a burning passion to get better each day at his craft. Empowering his students with an empathetic mindset. His faith has helped him to learn how to be vulnerable with his students and family. Establishing a trust ensures students will be with him for life.