

MERCHANDISER OF THE YEAR PUBLIC CATEGORY

William E. Sass III, PGA
Ocean City Golf Club
Berlin, Maryland

William “Buddy” Sass was born in Washington, D.C. to William, Jr. and Jayne Sass. He has a brother, Patrick and a sister, Suzanne. His father introduced him to the game of golf at the age of 10, by playing golf with him on Saturdays and by gifting him lessons from PGA Professionals Bill Deck and Bob Haley. He graduated from High Point University in 1984 with a BS in Accounting. Buddy was a 2-time NAIA Academic All-American and All-Conference golfer while at High Point. In 1991 Buddy received his MBA from Salisbury University.

Buddy’s first golf-related job was being a part-time shop employee for Hunt Crosby at Ocean Pines Country Club. After discussing his future with PGA Professional Bill Sporre, whom he admired and respected, Buddy decided to turn professional in 1984. He was elected to membership in the PGA of America in 1987. Buddy was the Assistant Golf Professional at High Point County Club, High Point, N.C. (1984-1985); Lochmere Golf Club, Cary, N.C. (1985-1988); Ocean Pines Country Club. (1988-1989); The Beach Club Golf Links, Berlin, MD (1989-1990) and as a Head PGA Professional at Ocean Pines Country Club, Berlin, MD (1991-1996); Deer Run Golf Club, Berlin, MD (1997-1998); and Ocean City Golf Club, Berlin, MD (1999-Present).

The purpose of Sass Golf Shop is to provide outstanding service and purchase opportunities for the various clientele of the course. This core value is complicated by the various types of customers that enjoy Ocean City’s facilities. The Premium members play approximately 15,000 rounds of golf and require all the daily items related to golf such as clubs, balls and accessories. The Secondary members have an entirely different set of needs and expectations, as they play an additional 30,000 rounds. Ocean City also serves a robust local golf population as well as package/travel golfers. As a result, the golf shop offers many types of merchandise suitable for more transient golfers. He notes that “it’s interesting, challenging and fun to try and stock the appropriate items for our varied and changing customer base.”

Buddy’s personal golf philosophy revolves around service and connection to others. He was taught by his mentors to anticipate customer needs by getting to know them and their families. He tries to develop long lasting relationships of service to his membership and other customers. He also believes his success has increased in proportion to his growing relationship with Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior.

This is the second time Sass has won the Merchandiser of the Year Public Award, the first time being in 2003 and he was the recipient of the Presidents Award in 2012.

Buddy has been married to his wife Sylvia, an avid golfer, for three years. He has two daughters Cecily (27) and Chloe (24), a son Will (26), stepdaughter Grace (26), and stepson Owen (24).