

## PRO TO PRO

By Tony L. Starks, Philip Tanfield

# Preparing Your Staff to be Better PGA Professionals



### Furthering Education

*Dave La Pour,  
PGA Director of Instruction,  
Colleton River Plantation Club,  
Bluffton, S.C.*

**D**avid La Pour, the PGA director of instruction at Colleton River Plantation Club in Bluffton, S.C., has echoed The PGA of America's commitment to education by developing a program that requires his staff to further expand their golf knowledge in order to help them better succeed in the industry.

The Golf Academy at Colleton River encompasses a certification program with 42 different tasks. Each member of La Pour's staff, which consists of four PGA Professionals and three apprentices, must take part in the certification process, which has four checkpoints: Base Instructor, Lead Instructor, Senior Instructor and Master Instructor.

Examples of the certifications include everything from how to use video systems when conducting a lesson to public speaking, even protocol for conducting a chipping lesson. La Pour (*pictured*) says it can take two to three years for a staff member to complete all 42 certifications.

"The benefit of this is that we have centralized teaching styles and concepts," explains La Pour, who spent eight years at Dave Pelz Golf School in Boca Raton, Fla., and five years at the WP Golf Institute in Minneapolis, Minn., before relocating to Colleton River. "Our students can get a lesson from one instructor and then get a continuation of the same lesson from a different instructor next week. The strength, in my opinion, is the teamwork we have as golf professionals and the improvement we see in our students."

According to La Pour, the certification program lends added value to his membership as well as his staff. "The members see the value of the Golf Academy and the training program, they see it when they take lessons," he says. "They know there is something there that gives them a stable and creditable learning base."

PGA Professionals obviously want their assistants to go on and have successful careers as head professionals, and La Pour's certification program gives his assistants a head start. "It's an accomplishment they can put on their resumes," he explains. "I know the assistants aren't going to be here forever, and when their next employer sees Colleton River

### USGA/PGA After School Program provides stepping stone for junior golfers

**T**he United States Golf Association and The PGA of America have partnered to expand the number of junior golfers throughout the country and foster life-long participation in the game by piloting

USGA/PGA After School programs in PGA Sections.

The pilot program involves eight PGA Sections that have demonstrated strong junior golf infrastructures - Dixie, Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey, Northern Texas, South Florida, Southern California and Wisconsin. A total of 39 schools from across the country were scheduled to host programs this fall, and the program is on pace to reach more than 1,000 kids in 43 schools during its pilot year.

"We are excited about the progress that



the USGA/PGA After School Program has made in such a short amount of time," says PGA President Jim Remy.

"One of the missions of our Association and its PGA Professionals is to build the

next generation of golfers. This program has and will continue to help us achieve that goal."

The After School Program is a four- to six-week activity conducted for one hour immediately after school, which meets one to two times each week. Sessions are conducted indoors and outdoors at schools, golf facilities and YMCAs using traditional golf equipment. PGA Professionals utilize the PGA First Swing and PGA Medalist curriculum to instruct youth on core golf skills - etiquette, Rules

and fundamentals. The final session of the USGA/PGA After School Program is conducted at a golf facility so that PGA Professionals can show the juniors how they can apply their skills learned in class as well as get them comfortable with going to the golf course.

"The USGA is encouraged by the initial response to the After School Program," says USGA President Jim Vernon. "We look forward to the continued development of the program and are excited to provide more students with meaningful opportunities to play this great game, with the goal of producing lifelong players."

To learn more about the USGA/PGA Junior Partnership and to see a full list of participating schools, go to [PlayGolfAmerica.com](http://PlayGolfAmerica.com) and click on Junior Golf.

# Play Golf America

## BEST PRACTICES REPORT



### 2010 Play Golf America Calendar

**May:** PGA Free Lesson Month

**June:** American Express Women's Golf Month

**July:** Family Golf Month

**July 5-11:** Take Your Daughter to the Course Week

**July:** Bring Your Kids to the Golf Range

**Sept. 3-6:** Patriot Golf Day

### Year-Round Events

- Get Golf Ready
- Play Golf America Days
- PGA Family Course
- American Express/PGA Friend of a Cardmember
- Junior Rates
- Time for Nine/9 Hole Rates

Log onto [PlayGolfAmerica.com](http://PlayGolfAmerica.com) for frequent updates throughout the year.

## “Time for 9” Promotion is Contributing to More Nine-Hole Play

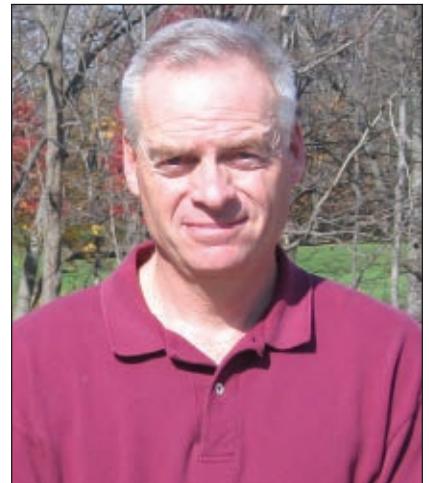
Play Golf America's national marketing resources are backing a new “Time for 9” campaign to combat the time and cost challenges of playing golf. PlayGolfAmerica.com now prominently features the promotion and a geographical search engine on the Web site's home page. Facilities can promote their nine-hole golf rates by completing a brief online form housed on the Web site.

PGA Professional Bernie Herceg, director of golf for the upscale, public Links at Hiawatha Landing in Apalachin, N.Y., says the “Time For 9” campaign has all the features of a well-needed and ideal promotion.

“Nine-hole playing opportunities have always been part of our rate structure,” says Herceg. “People just don't have time to play golf as much anymore. With nine holes, they can play out here at a good price in little time. It just needs more promotion on our end for it to take off.”

Herceg offers customers the opportunity to tee off from the back nine for a reduced rate on weekend mornings from 7-8:30 a.m. “It is a great way to fill up the back side for quick nine holes,” he says.

“Now we need to think outside the box and look at all aspects of the course to bring in revenue.”



PGA Professional Doug Stultz intertwines league play and nine-hole golf to encourage more play at the seven courses he oversees in Hamilton County, Ohio.

Outside-the-box thinking and nine-hole playing opportunities are driving a successful “League Card” program for PGA Professional Doug Stultz who oversees seven public courses in the Hamilton County (Ohio) parks system.

Hamilton County's “League Card” was offered for the first time in 2006. All league players at each of the seven courses receive a golf discount to play nine holes on days other than the days

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HONOR THE GAME.



## Growing the Game

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they participate in league play. It originally began as a "Spring Training" card to get them warmed up for the league season. Now the card encourages off-league play during the spring and fall shoulder seasons, as well as throughout the summer league season.

"We are encouraging that league player to start earlier, play more and stay with us longer," says Stultz. "We have the ability to customize league cards to each of our seven facilities. We monitor it each year to see how we need to modify the card discounts – whether we need to expand use or restrict use based on each course's demand.

"The program has been very successful at helping us fill times and it is now something the leagues look forward to receiving. In fact, we even have waiting lists at some of our facilities for league play now."

Steve Marino, PGA head professional at The Golf Club at Yankee Trace in Centerville, Ohio, joined the 27-hole facility in 2005, just three years after the city converted a three-hole practice course into a nine-hole course.

"When I came here, play on the nine-

hole course wasn't where it could have been," says Marino. "It was a perception problem with players calling it the practice course or the new course. We started fresh by naming all three nines and building a tri-card so that we could better market each nine more effectively."

The original 18 holes were named the Heritage and Legend with the new course being named the Vintage.

"It is not a full three-nine rotation, mostly because the demand is not out there," explains Marino. "The benefit is that there are always two tees open. Once we named the nines, we opened up the ability to play all three."

The former 18-hole course is now a Heritage to Legend rotation that remained \$59 on weekends. With the new tri-card in place, Marino has added new nine-hole revenue.

"It is almost like we have created another golf course at a lower cost," he says. "On weekends, we can have nine-hole play tee off the Legends and potentially rotate Vintage at a lower cost. While the Heritage to Legend rotation is \$59, the Legend to Vintage rotation is just \$39. Not only do we introduce Vintage to a great deal of new players, this lower cost rotation created a whole

## Register Your Facility for the "Time For 9" facility search engine

Visit [www.PlayGolfAmerica.com](http://www.PlayGolfAmerica.com)

Click on "Time For 9"

Bottom, left of "Time For 9" page, click on the PGA Professional link for "Promote Your Nine-Hole Golf"

new client base who are able to come in at a lower cost."

In recent years, Vintage nine-hole play has been Yankee Trace's primary growth opportunity. In 2005, the year they began promoting the 27 holes as three nines, Vintage saw 9,400 rounds, earning \$146,000. Last year alone, Vintage grew to host 15,500 rounds, earning \$232,000 in revenue.

"The biggest change I've seen is that golfers perception of nine holes has become more popular with not just women, juniors, beginners, leagues, but with walk-ups on weekends," says Marino.

"One thing we proved this year is that people are not going to give up golf. They may not be able to play 18 because of time or want to spend the money on 18-hole golf, but they can spend two hours playing nine holes. We need to tap into that. Nine-hole play is less expensive and fits into today's lifestyle." ■

## PGA President's Plaque Spotlight

**Name:** Ralph Landrum, PGA Head Professional

**Facility:** World of Sports, Florence, Ky; president of Landrum Golf Management

**PGA Section:** Kentucky

### Partial list of Accomplishments:

- Played in six U.S. Opens, three PGA Championships and two Masters
- PGA Tour member 1983-85
- Seven top-10 PGA Tour finishes
- Three-time Kentucky PGA Champion
- Three-time Kentucky PGA Player of the Year
- 2009 Kentucky Senior PGA Player of Year
- Kentucky Section PGA Junior Golf Leader Award 1997
- Kentucky PGA Board of Directors member

**About Ralph:** An accomplished player and a dedicated PGA Professional, Ralph is "home" at World of Sports in Florence, Ky. He learned the game at World of Sports as a child, worked there as a teen, returned frequently during his PGA Tour playing years, then returned in 1996 as the PGA head professional.

As the recipient of the Kentucky PGA Section President's Plaque award for the past two consecutive years, his dedication to growing the game has influenced the city of Florence to spend \$4.5 million on a new clubhouse, practice facility renovations and

an all-new indoor practice facility at the World of Sports.

### Standout Programs:

- Junior Programs – some 400 participating youth each year!
  - Junior League Spring, Summer & Fall Programs
    - 8-12 year-olds; 6 weeks of on-course instruction and 9-hole play
  - Pee Wee Spring, Summer & Fall Programs
    - 4-7 year-olds; 4 week 90-minute program of on-course & practice facility instruction
  - Parent-Child Tournaments
    - Two sold-out tournaments in 2009, first year
    - Expand to monthly in Summer 2010
  - Ladies Instructional League – averaging 75 participating women each week
    - 8 weeks of 30-minute golf clinics covering every aspect of the game
    - Ladies are encouraged to play golf after the clinics and receive on-course instruction.
  - Landrum also offers Family Discount Nights, Free Summer Clinics every Monday, Get Golf Ready, Night Golf and "Beat the Heat" all-you-can play August golf program.

### In His Own Words:

"Why do I invest in player development programs? Four letters: C-A-S-H. If you start

adding up the people in all these different programs it really makes a difference for us. I saw all of the down projections for golf, but there is a lot of money to be made. Play Golf America programs were developed to improve your bottom line.

"While we don't make a great deal of profit off the instruction in our ladies instructional league, we do make profit from selling so many rounds of golf to them. Our junior programs are profit centers. Our costs are less than a third of what we are charging, plus every kid shows up with \$5 for to spend after their round. Even with Free Lesson Night, they have to purchase a bucket of balls and short-term profit is in the range balls. But, more importantly, long-term profit is in creating relationships and building loyalty.

"Get Golf Ready is 100-percent successful for us. I pay attention to the stuff that Play Golf America sends out to us. Their recommendations for how to teach, what to include, on-course instruction – it all makes sense."



## Q-School players impressed with PGA Village

For the first time ever, PGA Golf Club, in Port St. Lucie, Fla., played host to a PGA Tour Q-School First Stage Qualifying Round in late October. Several recognizable names in golf circles took part, including Stage winner Erik Compton (pictured), "The Big Break I" Champion Justin Peters, former Tour player Gary Nicklaus and Sam Saunders, grandson of Arnold Palmer.

A number of players gave *PGA Magazine* their impression of both PGA Golf Club and the nearby 35-acre PGA Center for Golf Learning and Performance golf instruction, practice technology and fitness campus:

- "It's a great facility to hold a tournament," said Compton, a double heart transplant survivor, who

blistered the field by seven strokes with a 22-under par 266 four-round total. "It's wide open, and there is plenty of room for a tournament."

- "It's just a great place for golf," said



Saunders, who won the Florida State High School Championship at PGA Golf Club five years prior on the same Wanamaker Course that Q-School qualifying was held. "I like it a lot."

- "The practice facility (PGA Center for Golf Learning and Performance) is awesome," said Steve LeBrun. "You can literally do everything. You can work on your short game and every other part of your game."
- "The facilities over here are unbelievable," said Thomas Curtis, of the United Kingdom. "We don't have anything like this at home. The course is in great shape."

Compton, Peters and LeBrun were among the 22 players who advanced.

Golf Academy Certification on their resume they'll have the chance to explain everything they learned during their training here.

"We're doing this because we want assistant professionals – future PGA head professionals – to add value to their vocation and service to the club and its membership." ■

## Team Golf

*Tony Martinez,  
PGA Head Professional,  
Keeton Park Golf Course,  
Dallas, Texas*

In an effort to promote competitive junior golf on the team level, the Northern Texas PGA Section recently started Team Golf, a new initiative that introduces beginner-level juniors to tournament play.

One of the PGA Professionals working on the program is Tony Martinez, the PGA head professional at Keeton Park Golf Course in Dallas and the Northern Texas PGA Junior Golf Leader in 2005, 2007 and 2009.

"While teaching technique is necessary, it doesn't really give these kids a good idea how to play golf," says Martinez. "This program gives juniors aspects of golf that can only be achieved through experience: proper etiquette, playing at unfamiliar clubs, good sportsmanship, team support and camaraderie."

Team Golf has three age groups: 7–10, 11–13 and 14-and-up. At Keeton Park, Martinez holds weekly team practices, and often tries to involve his better high school and college players, who contribute insight from their level. "The response has been overwhelming in every age group," says Martinez. "They develop a sense of confidence and pride that comes from the Team Golf experience. It's an investment in the future. You're giving these kids a unique experience and getting them hooked on golf."

During competition, Martinez assigns a PGA

Professional or a member of the Northern Texas PGA Section staff to each hole to see how the players are doing, time them, give rulings and provide some coaching tips. "This helps to ensure that the kids know what they are doing, competition-wise, and it provides them with PGA Professionals and apprentices who can be looked to for direction," says Martinez.

The kids compete for points that can be redeemed for a menu of items, from snacks to equipment.

Martinez feels Team Golf can benefit facilities with potential new sources of incremental revenue such as team practices, coaching and instruction, league play, and merchandise sales of team shirts, caps and more, in addition to more rounds of golf from families.

"I have been active in junior golf for a long time, but this is a new vehicle for generating excitement and especially for promoting team competition," he explains. "It's a joint effort by all of us and we are very excited about growing it." ■

## Facebook Instruction

*Brad Redding,  
PGA Director of Instruction,  
The Resort Club at Grande Dunes,  
Myrtle Beach, S.C.*

We've witnessed the impact social media has had on golf, with Stewart Cink Tweeting away during PGA Tour events and a Tiger Woods Facebook page that has more than a million "fans." But Brad Redding may be on the verge of uncovering the next big thing as it relates to Facebook and PGA Professionals.

Redding, a PGA Master Professional, is the director of instruction at the Grande Dunes Golf Academy at The Resort Club at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, S.C., where he spends approximately 1,500 hours a year on the lesson tee. Utilizing

