

Michigan's Jerry Hoefling, Sr. Wins 2004 PCS Clubmaker of the Year Honors

Jerry Hoefling, Sr., PCS Advanced Professional "Class A" Clubmaker, who is The Club Doctor in Saginaw, Mich., was named 2004 PCS Clubmaker of the Year. The award was presented at the 13th Annual PCS International Symposium and Expo Awards Banquet at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville, Ky., on Saturday, March 6, 2004. 2003 PCS Clubmaker of the Year Bob Uebelhor, PCS Advanced Professional "Class A" Clubmaker, Uebelhor Custom Golf, Indianapolis, Ind., announced the winner.

Hoefling was one of six Clubmaker of the Year finalists. Regional Clubmaker of the year honors went to PCS Certified "Class A" Clubmaker David Bass, David Bass Golf, Raleigh, N.C.; PCS Advanced Professional "Class A" Clubmaker John Curry, Accufit Golf, Mt. Pleasant, S.C.; PCS Advanced Professional "Class A" Clubmaker Ed Grabowy, The Golf Doctor, Woodstock, Ga.; PCS Professional "Class A" Clubmaker Jacques Intriere, Greenwich Golf Fitting Studio, Greenwich, Conn.; and PCS Professional "Class A" Clubmaker Patrick Kennedy, Burlington, Vt.

Dedicated Clubmaker

A 62-year-old Navy veteran and retired General Motors employee, Hoefling is known in his area for his clubmaking and club repairing expertise. Included in his nomination packet for the PCS Clubmaker of the Year Award were three testimonial letters from golf professionals from clubs in the Saginaw area as well as a supportive letter from LPGA Tour Pro Penny Pulz.

Hoefling got his first taste of golf working as a caddy in the 1950s. He started making clubs in 1981 as a hobby, and began a part-time business from his home in 1982. He quickly gained a reputation for excellence, especially

2004 PCS Clubmaker of the Year Jerry Hoefling, Sr., left, receives the commemorative crystal vase trophy from 2003 Clubmaker of the Year Bob Uebelhor.

for his ability to refinish wood-headed clubs. When he retired in 1998 after 35 years with General Motors, he became a full-time clubmaker. In 2001, he moved to a new home where the basement is designed exclusively for his clubmaking shop.

In addition to holding all PCS certifications, Hoefling completed GolfWorks Levels I, II and Master classes; received Dynacraft Shaft Research training; obtained Mitchell Golf STEELCLUB Fitter certification; and added Royal Precision Certified Rifle Center certification from Swing Science in 2003.

Hoefling is a 12-year PCS member who has attended 12 consecutive PCS International Symposia and Expos. He was recognized with the Just Award in 2003 for his many contributions to the organization. He twice previously was a Regional Clubmaker of the Year.

He presented a workshop on refinishing wooden heads in 2001, in 2002 led a seminar on educational issues, and in both 2003 and 2004 was a lead presenter in the Pre-Expo Tutorial on Clubmaking/Repair. He also demonstrated a bench skill at a 2004 PCS Expo workshop. He is a member of the PCS Education and Training Committee, and he also is a mentor for anyone having problems with the Club Fitter Exam. He currently is a member of the Technical Support Committee, and he is conducting research on mapping shaft profiles. He is a

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founding member and current president of the PCS Michigan Chapter.

In the Shop

His shop is organized and functional, including a hitting net with swing analyzer. He has built several clubmaking tools, all pointed toward helping him refine his skills and produce the best possible clubs for the customer. He estimates his work is 50 percent repair, 20 percent fitting, 20 percent clubmaking, and 10 percent retrofitting golf clubs. His best selling brands are, in wood heads: Purefit DC Tour, Wishon, and KZG; in putters: Golfsmith Snakeyes, KZG Milled and Dynacraft; in iron heads: Wishon, KZG, and Dynacraft DFS; in steel shafts: TrueTemper Dynalite, Royal Precision Rifle, and Harrison Lite; in graphite shafts: SK Fiber, Gramman 310, and UST Proforce; in Grips: Star, Golf Pride, Royal/Winn.

His typical fitting session begins with a customer interview, then the customer completes a survey while Hoefling evaluates the current equipment. They review the information together. Hoefling checks the customer's grip size. He obtains the customer's swing speed, ball speed, swing path, launch angle, and face hit with a **Golf Achiever**. Using decals, the customer hits different length test clubs to determine the best club length and several irons to determine the best lie angle. The final step is to make preliminary recommendations, discuss them

with the customer, and determine whether to make new clubs or retrofit the existing set.

In recommending wood heads, he seeks the head that will provide the best ball speed, spin and launch angle, as well as the size most comfortable to the customer. With irons, he starts with the customer selecting a look and style of head that is pleasing, then Hoefling finds the component that will fulfill the dynamic specifications to be met.

He considers the shaft to be significantly more important to the overall club than the head. He maintains profiles of more than 200 shafts, which he places into three categories: feel, mid-fee and harsh. He determines the category through a number obtained by dividing tip frequency by butt frequency. The customer's interview and results of the hitting session indicate which category shaft he recommends.

Reaching Out

He has worked since 1998 with a junior golf program at Sawmill Country Club. He ensures the clubs are fit to juniors and that they are safe. For the first time in 2001, he presented a seminar at a local public course on how golf equipment can affect performance. About 50 local golfers attended.

He advertises very little. He says the most effective advertising is word-of-mouth, and he has used that approach to build his business. Plus he has established working relationships with six teaching pros at various clubs in the Saginaw/Bay City area.

This has resulted in increased business. He wrote in a previous Clubmaker of the Year nomination:

"The development of the relationship occurred differently with each club pro. Typically, I start an ongoing dialogue with the pro, and eventually we talk about his game, swing and the problems his clubs could be causing. I then offer to

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Posing with 2004 PCS Clubmaker of the Year Jerry Hoefling, Sr., left, are the 2004 Regional Clubmakers of the Year, from left, Pat Kennedy, David Bass, Ed Grabowy, John Curry, and Jacques Intriere.

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work on his clubs to correct some of his problems. When he discovers how my knowledge of equipment can help him, he wants to offer that service to his students and members.

"These arrangements benefit me by giving me a steady supply of repair work, including regripping, reshafting, refinishing, loft and lie adjustments, and some full-scale fittings. It seldom results in my selling a full set of custom clubs . . . The reason for this is that the pro wants to make the profit in selling 'pro-line' clubs from his own shop."

Hoefling notes the following benefits for teaching pros:

- He has a reliable source to get repairs done for his customers.
- He has a knowledgeable equipment professional to assist in swing problems with his students.
- He doesn't need to work on clubs himself and can devote himself to teaching and running his shop.
- He doesn't need to have the equipment expense of a full-service shop.
- His inventory of grips, etc., is reduced or negligible.

As noted by testimonials in his 2004 Clubmaker of the Year Nomination Package, Hoefling's approach, in both club fitting and building his business, is successful. *☺*

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