



# PGA

Kentucky Section

## 2014 KPGA MERCHANDISER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION

**Facility Type:**                      ☒ Private                      ☐ Public                      ☐ Resort

**Name of Nominee:**                      Gary Bebelaar, PGA

**Facility Name:**                      Big Spring Country Club

**Facility Address:**                      5901 Dutchman's Lane, Louisville, KY 40205

**Facility Phone Number:**                      502-458-2027

**Nominee E-mail Address:**                      gbebeaar@bigspringcc.com

1. Please list any Section or National awards you have received.

Award	Year Received	Section
Horton Smith Award	2003, 2004	Kentucky
Merchandiser of the Year	2000	Kentucky – Public
Merchandiser of the Year	2011	Kentucky - Private
Golf Professional of the Year	2002	Kentucky
Bill Strausbaugh Award	2011	Kentucky

2. Do you own the Golf Merchandise Concession?    ☐ Yes    ☒ No

- 2a. If no, who owns the Golf Merchandise Concession?

Big Spring Country Club.

3. What percentage of time do you personally spend in the merchandising area at your facility?

I regard 100% of my job as an opportunity for merchandizing. I spend approximately 15 hours per week working in the golf shop specifically on displays, folding, dusting and in general just making sure the shop has a grand presentation. Additionally, through my collaboration with Retail Tribe, we have an in-depth proshop website and email system that is dedicated to growing merchandise sales and marketing the PGA Professional as the expert in Instruction, Fitting, and Merchandising. This positions the professional staff as the key necessary ingredient for all golf club purchases. Several hours per week are dedicated to working on this site and weekly newsletter. This has only strengthened our merchandising position with our membership. To view examples please visit the following link: <http://www.garybebeaar.com> When I am not in the shop, I still dedicate my time to merchandising. While giving a lesson,

in a meeting, or even at lunch I am constantly looking for opportunities to grow our business or help a member. This may or may not include improving the equipment that someone is using, or creating opportunities for a member to market their own brand via corporate logo orders. In addition, with each and every meeting with an outing committee, I encourage them to purchase tee favors and prizes through our golf shop. If they are already purchasing, I look for opportunities to increase their buy, or increase our margin. The impact of corporate orders and outing business has been directly responsible for a steady growth in golf shop sales of nearly \$100,000 over the past 6 years. The entire golf shop staff is involved in merchandising operations, with a focus on creating a neat presentation, clean fixtures, carpet etc, and folded, face-up presentation. Our philosophy is to keep the shop looking like it is a "Grand Opening Day" or the presentation of one of the finest retail shops in a mall.

4. What is the total number of 18-hole rounds played at your facility annually?

Our golf operation has averaged 17,000 rounds annually for the past 6 golf seasons. In FY'13 we played 16,200 rounds. It is notable that rounds dropped this year, but sales grew by nearly 20%.

5. How often are your facility's merchandise displays changed annually?

Our merchandise displays are changed on a daily and weekly basis. Merchandise is moved within the shop on a daily and weekly basis in order to keep the shop looking "fresh". Items that are moving slowly are moved to areas of higher traffic, and efforts are made to draw the buyers attention to these items. Our golf shop is a constant project with focus on cleanliness, folding, and overall neat presentation. I couldn't imagine walking in to the golf shop at Augusta National and finding a mess, and thus the same expectations for our golf shop are communicated to all staff members.

6. What were your 2012 Gross Merchandise Sales?

Our 2012 Gross Merchandise Sales were \$327,705.37. Our profit margin for the year was 32%. Most would expect our country club to have higher gross merchandise sales, as I did when I first arrived at Big Spring, however a large percentage of our membership have dual residencies and they are in their other residence from October through April. The membership is very supportive our golf shop, but are also very loyal to their second club during their time in the south in the winter. As a result, 85% of our gross merchandise sales take place during a six month time period of April thorough September.

7. What are your projected 2013 Gross Merchandise Sales?

Our projected 2013 Gross Merchandise Sales are \$390,000 with a gross profit margin of 33%.

8. Does your facility have the Mill River Plan or a similar merchandise-purchasing plan in place?

Our facility does not have a Mill River plan or any similar merchandise purchasing plan in place.

- 8a. If so, what is the initiation fee for a person to join the program at your facility?

Not applicable.

9. How many individuals participate in the plan?

Not applicable.

10. What is the total square footage used for display of merchandise in your golf shop?

The total square footage used for display of merchandise in our golf shop is approximately 1000 square feet.

11. Summarize your merchandising philosophy (maximum 300 words).

From the first day I began working in the golf business I took great pride in overall shop presentation. I thought it was important to offer a variety of products and price points to meet most of the “buying customer’s” needs and wants. This includes stocking the basics, in addition to novelty items, accessories and impulse purchase opportunities. I make sure that our staff is educated and involved in our buying decisions, and that they think about how the shop looks from the customer’s point of view when they enter the doors to our shop, to help ensure a great presentation.

I think that presentation makes a huge difference in how customers evaluate the quality of their PGA Professional. At the very least it can help to create a good first impression, and a positive start for great expectations. Our golf shop stocks a variety of clothing lines, with each line having its own niche in our operation. We carry three distinct price points of soft goods, with brand name choices at each price point. We carry luxury apparel lines with traditional fabrics and appearance, and also offer a variety of tech brands and fabrics that are more fashion forward for those who are in search of flare. Our staff spends a great deal of time educating our membership on the features and benefits that soft goods materials and design can provide, outside of a great look. From an apparel perspective, we focus on keeping the shop well stocked with key items and basics programs, and offer frequent small deliveries of fashion clothing, which keeps the look fresh look and varies the merchandise offered. We always try to keep our fashion deliveries small in size to prevent the members from feeling like they are seeing their fashion on a large number of other members. With regards to fashion, we also try to jump in on “hot trends” with small deliveries to keep our members appetite for fashion wet. From a hard goods perspective, we focus on offering a larger inventory of putters, and wedges, which tend to be more of an impulse purchase item. At the same time, we carry a small inventory of woods, and hybrids, and rarely stock any sets of irons as we are dedicated to custom fitting and have numerous vendor fitting carts on site. It is my belief that custom fitting is a time to be one on one with a member, and focus on the growing our personal relationship. We offer the full-set fitting process with a variety of fitting systems that include launch monitors and state of the art fitting software. Each fitting is an opportunity to not only sell one club, but put a customer in to 14 new clubs, and a new bag to match. We truly try to help our members purchase the right clubs for their game, that will allow them to hit better shots. Each fitting, whether it be for a driver, or set of irons, is aimed at a full set composition evaluation, and hopefully replacement.

Finally, my philosophy is that of “full-service” where our staff focuses on being involved with the members in the golf shop. It is a must that we greet our members before they greet us, we move on the floor to show them merchandise as opposed to pointing, and we make sure that being in the golf shop is a pleasant experience. **We want them to want to be in the golf shop.**

Nomination Deadline – December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 5:00 p.m. EDT

Return forms to:  
Kentucky Section PGA  
Golf House Kentucky  
1116 Elmore Just Drive  
Louisville, KY 40245  
(502) 243-9266 fax