



John David and the Minority Golf Association of America, Inc.

“Building on the Sport of Golf is Our # 1 Issue.”

by Dana R. Butler

The Minority Golf Association of America was established in 1991 with the express purpose of introducing inner-city, at-risk, and minority kids to the sport of golf: Making golf accessible and available to these kids is part of the positive developmental efforts and programs the MGAA promotes throughout the United States and internationally.

The mechanics of the MGAA are in motion 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, but president John David says the exhausting work has been nothing but rewarding. After a long day of teaching and playing, David typically visits the home of one of their corporate sponsors to network and promote the MGAA. He says it works because sponsors are parents, too. "The kids were so excited, they couldn't sleep the night before, and the parents are asking, 'What are you doing with my kids?' This is exciting."

The MGAA does have some close corporate contacts, specifically with American Airlines and NEC/USA. David says the MGAA could not have achieved the level of success it has without the help of these organizations and all who support the association.

And they have been successful. The



JOHN DAVID WITH OWNERS OF ST. LUCIA GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB RECEIVING MGAA AWARD FOR SUPPORT OF JUNIOR GOLF. (THE "BALD EAGLE" BY BOEHM PORCELAIN STUDIO)

MGAA researches and furnishes information and statistical data, answering requests regarding the feasibility of starting golf programs in specific communities and what programs are currently avail-

does no good to introduce a child to golf if he or she has no access to the game after the clinic is over."

Maintenance is a large part of the MGAA's "18 steps to success." They



KIDS RECEIVING EMPOWERMENT SPEECH BY JOHN DAVID ~ CLINIC, ST. LUCIA

able in terms of minorities in golf "The important thing," says David, is to be sure that local pros and facilities follow up with these kids and these programs. It

keep going back to the location of the original exhibition and clinic until a program is up and running in that community. The other step involve mentoring.

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John David himself came to the game of golf in a roundabout way. He began working at Westhampton Country Club maintaining the clay tennis courts. He saw the caddies heading out for a day on the course each morning and started asking questions. When he found out there was money to be made, he lied about his age (caddies had to be 14 years old) and began toting bags and playing on caddies' day. He later became a shop attendant, and when the assistant pro left the club, David was in training for that position. A black assistant pro was almost unheard of at that time. He was playing scratch golf by the time he was 17 years old and turned down a scholarship to Penn State because he was making enough money to put himself through school.

Not every 17-year-old has quite so lucrative a job, and David is well aware of the opportunities golf can provide for kids. The MGAA is aligned with NCAA colleges and universities so the MGAA can make schools aware of potential scholarship candidates. "If we have a kid who's shooting 72 and he's 15 years old, colleges' eyes will open up and they will place the calls." But the knowledge and exposure to the game have to come first for a kid to take advantage of the educational possibilities.

During David's junior year at Penn State, the PGA lifted its 'Caucasian Only' clause, and David wanted to play on the Tour. However, in 1962, there were still race riots in the South. Just because the Tour opened up, didn't mean everything else would follow. Hotels, restaurants, etc., especially in the southern United States, were still a problem for Blacks, and sponsorships were not exactly falling in the laps of young Black players. As David says, "How you gonna compete with half a loaf of bread?"

David went to work as a sales rep for a clothing company between 1969 and 1976, and as he became more successful in his



TIGER WOODS ASSISTING A JR. GOLFER, PARK HILL GOLF COURSE, DENVER, CO.

career, he found he was doing all his business on the golf course. He moved on into other arenas of marketing and sales, but when he picked up his clubs again in 1990, he felt like Rip Van Winkle. He'd been away from the game for years, but nothing had changed. It didn't take long for him to be shooting scratch golf again, which was great, but nothing had changed in business either. Business was still conducted on the golf course, and minorities were a very small part of it. David decided that if a change was going to come it had to come from the ground up. They needed to start with the kids.



JR. GOLFERS FROM MILE HIGH SAND BAGGERS, DENVER, CO.

PHOTO BY MINORITY GOLF STAFF

Golf is a multibillion-dollar business," says David. "People can have huge careers. Even if they don't do that, corporate America analyzes potential employees on the golf course. When people are in business today, they do their networking on the golf course." Minorities cannot be left out of this loop. To this end, the MGAA conducts seminars on "Using Golf as a Business Tool." These seminars help organizations and individuals strategize their business golf efforts.

The future holds great promise for David and the MGAA. They are using the latest technology to get information on golf and golf programs onto the World Wide Web. The MGAA home page also teaches kids about the oppor-

tunities available to them and teaches them to write effective resumes and apply for scholarships. The ultimate goal is to get the information into computer learning classrooms and used in conjunction with indoor and outdoor practice centers.

But the number one priority is a simple one to get both golf clubs and textbooks into the hands of every child in America. Armed with these tools, the future holds promise for all "The key," David says, "is not to wait for the kids to come to the sport. We need to reach out and embrace them into the family." For information on MGAA programs and/or membership, call (631) 288-8255.

The Minority Golf Association of America, Inc., is now called The Multicultural Golf Association of America.

The MGAA Program in St. Lucia is called:

The Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program, sponsored by the St. Lucia Golf & Country Club, and Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The 2000 event was held at the St. Lucia Golf & Country Club. June 22nd- 25th, 2000, and hosted by the Hyatt Regency. Next year's celebrity Golf Classic will be held in St. Lucia the last week of June 2001.

CARIBBEAN MISSION PROJECT

MGAA Caribbean mission is to develop cultural and youth empowerment for the Caribbean Islands in conjunction with the Caribbean Golf Association, and in partnership with local associations, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Tourism and Sports and other relevant government agencies.

We will accomplish our mission in conjunction with the Caribbean Golf Association and in partnership with local associations, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Community Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the Sports Development Foundation, and other relevant Government agencies and non-government agencies.

<http://www.mgaa.com>