

The "Pied Piper" of "Pee Wee" Golf

PGA Golf Professional, Brendon Elliott has always done things just a little bit different from the norm for a Golf Professional. Either by design or because of circumstances he has found himself in professionally. Take for example the position he holds at the historic Winter Park Country Club as the PGA Head Golf Professional & Club Manager where he has been for the past 13 years. "There is nothing "Normal" about Winter Park Country Club" Elliot jokes. "We are about as unique of a club as you will find in Central Florida or even in the entire State." "We are a municipal, 9 hole, primarily walking golf course that uses a "Ball Drop" system in place of tee times to start play. People are just not used to that" Elliott explains. "We don't have a driving range or a real practice area for that matter. Our Clubhouse and Golf Course is the second oldest in the area and has a spot on the National Register of Historic Places. Winter Park Country Club was founded in 1914." Elliott says. "Despite our differences, we are loved by many golfers in the greater Orlando area." Elliott's statement is backed up clearly by the distinction that Winter Park Country Club received back in August of 2010 when Orlando Magazine named WPCC as the "Second Best Public Course" in Central Florida. Like most PGA Professionals, Elliott is a jack of all trades. He has many various duties at Winter Park Country Club most of which see him in front of a computer doing administrative duties rather than out on the Golf Course.

The biggest thing however that makes Elliott different from your normal Golf Professional is the way he goes about growing the game and how he fulfills his passion for teaching the game to others. "I teach golf to 3-8 year olds...almost exclusively" Elliot say's with a smile. In 2008 Elliott formed Brendon Elliott Golf, LLC which was his golf instruction business based out of his home in Deltona, FL. "Since I did not have the space or the means of teaching golf at Winter Park Country Club I began my own instruction business based out of our home. We took out a small loan and had a synthetic green, fringe, rough and bunker put in our backyard and I purchased a large hitting net, video equipment, training aids



Brendon Elliott with his daughter Lexie as he was honored as a Top 50 Kids Teacher at the 2011 PGA Merchandise Show.



and everything else a teaching business would need and went to it giving lessons on my off time from WPCC." Elliott explains. Shortly after the completion of his home teaching studio in the spring of 2008 came the birth of the junior golf program for which Elliott is now probably best know for, Little Linksters.

"When we first started Little Linksters in early 2008, my wife and I did it because we saw a void. Kids in the pre-K through early grade school ages of 3-8

years old were not being introduced to Golf. They were offered Dance, Music, Karate, Computer, Soccer and even Foreign Language but not Golf. Other than what they saw on the Wii, Golf was foreign to many of these kids. It's not mainstream like all of other activities for these ages" Elliott passionately explains. It is understandable to many people that a great majority of Golf Professionals do not teach Golf to kids this young but Elliott does not agree with this line of

thought at all. "I understand completely that Golf is a difficult game to learn and that physically, many kids at these ages may not be ready to learn the finer points of the golf swing but in my mind, if we don't give them an introduction to golf and let them know what its all about, get them excited about it, then we will lose them to all the other choices that they have offered to them. I can't let that happen, there is way too much the game teaches beyond the act of hitting a ball into a hole that I feel kids should learn, especially in their developmental years."

Many people may ask the question, how do you get 3-8 year olds excited about golf? Elliott has come up with many great things to get kids excited about the game we all love. "That very question was one that we asked ourselves over and over again when we were developing our program. The first way we thought of to get kids "into" Golf was to develop some cool cartoon characters that were golfers. The creation of our characters, "Floppy," "Birdie" and "Bogey" back in early 2010 were key in our mission to excite "Pee Wees" about golf. We created a coloring book/program guide based around our characters and program and released that back in September of last year" Explains Elliott. The Little Linksters "Golf Fundamentals" Coloring Book has attracted much attention over the course of the past few months and is something that Elliott and his team is very proud of.

Beyond the Little Linksters program itself, Elliott has also come up with exciting ways to show that Pee Wee golfers can indeed play this game. Starting on December 1st of last year and lasting through January 15th of this year, Little Linksters, LLC along with its numerous vendors and supporters ran the 1st Annual "Little Linksters "Best Pee Wee Golf Swing in America" Video Contest. Kids from all across the country in three age groups, 3-4 years old, 5-6 years old and 7-8 years old were asked to submit video of their golf swings for the chance to not only be crowned as having the "Best Pee Wee Golf Swing in America" but also win some great prizes. The total prize package included items such as a complete set of clubs from US Kids Golf, apparel from the Littlest Golfer, and training aids from EyeLine Golf, Almost Golf, the Golfer's Footprint, CSI Golf and MoRodz. The winners also received a great Little Linksters gift pack as well as free online lessons with Brendon Elliott through a great new technology from program partner, Golf Coach Direct. A total prize package for each age group was valued at nearly \$800.

Of course the biggest draw to the

contest for many ways the amazing panel of celebrity judges that Elliott was fortunate enough to assemble for the contest. The panel included PGA & LPGA Professional and former "Big Break" contestant Kelly Sheehan, world renowned golf instructor and Golf Channel star Hank Haney and one of the games greatest players of all time Annika Sorenstam.

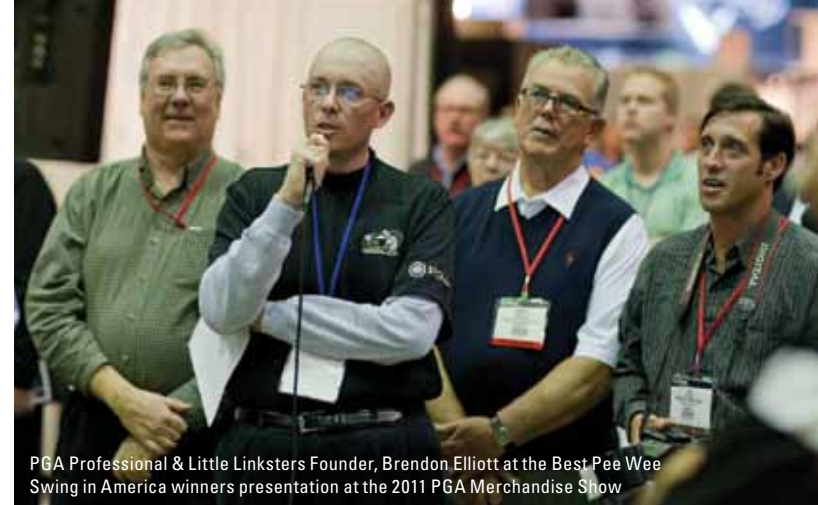
The contest saw just over 80 entries come in from around the country and even from Canada and beyond. "We were very happy for getting so many entries in our first year. Considering we did not do much PR on the contest we were thrilled. Getting entries from Canada and other parts of the world this year have led to



us opening entries from those across the globe for our next contest in December of this year" explains Elliott. The winners were announced at the 2011 PGA Merchandise Show at the Littlest Golfer Inc. booth. Both Kelly Sheehan and Annika Sorenstam, who served as judges for the contest were on hand for the presentation.

The winner in the 3-4 age division was 3 year old Jack Ryan Donovan. In the 5-6 year old age group was 6 year old Amari Avery and in the 7-8 age group was Karah Sanford. To see video's of the winners and all of the contestants log onto the "Blog" section of www.BrendonElliottGolf.com

Brendon Elliott and Little Linksters, LLC is gaining more and more support from the golf industry each and every month as they work toward taking the program to a national stage in late 2011. "Brendon is a talented man with great



PGA Professional & Little Linksters Founder, Brendon Elliott at the Best Pee Wee Golf Swing in America winners presentation at the 2011 PGA Merchandise Show

ideas and endless energy, but his respect for kids, and love for the game of golf is what drives him. The Little Linksters is a well thought out, honest, and exciting approach to children's golf; based firmly on the FUNdamentals" say's Kris Wilson, Founder and CEO of the Littlest Golfer Inc. Kraig Kann from the Golf Channel and HTK Media adds "Brendon Elliott is a man on a mission. His Little Linksters program is more than just a good idea - it's a vision, and a personal passion. Creating a concept, developing a plan and taking it to the masses isn't new in golf circles. There are a lot of ideas out there to bring children to golf... but Little Linksters makes sure that once the connection is made... the building block is there for a lifetime of enjoyment." Keith Soriano, Head Golf Professional at City Park Golf Course in Denver, CO say's "Brendon Elliott, is one of this industry's next great leaders. His vision for Little Linksters goes beyond the "traditional" model of golf instruction. Cultivating customers at an age that has largely been ignored by the golf industry and fostering their development for the long haul is a fresh way of approaching the issue of a flat customer base. With the passion that Brendon and his wife Melisa bring to their work, Little Linksters is sure to put the FUN in Fundamentals."

As a company and program, Little Linksters, LLC made huge strides forward in 2010. "We have LOTS of work to do but we are determined to bring the game of golf to all "Pee Wee" golfers across the country as soon as possible. The young golfer needs more attention and that is what Little Linksters, LLC plans to do, give any kid 3-8 years old that is interested in golf a better, structured and FUN introduction to the game. We will grow the future of the game one "Pee Wee" at a time" explains Elliott.

The mission of Little Linksters, LLC and PGA Professional Brendon Elliott is clear and because of that the future of golf looks bright. 🏌️