

10/07/2019

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to start from the beginning when I was first exposed to the game of golf being when my family relocated to George in 1998 and bought a small holding in Wilderness Heights. My father was a very capable and competitive golfer and I never understood why he loved this game so much!!

I first started playing golf when I was 15 and my home course at the time was the "Old design" Sedge Links and shortly after we moved to George and I became a member at George Golf Club.

It all started in my final years at school when I caddied at Fancourt and The Links for extra pocket money over the weekends but was always planning to study my BCOM at the University of Stellenbosch once I matriculated. During my off season break after my final exams I approached Blyth Reid (Golf Director) at the time to enquire if there was any casual work available over the festive season and he acknowledged and said well we are looking for a Beverage Cart attendant if I would be interested, I gladly accepted the offer. It was about 2 months later when I was offered a permanent position as Starter Marshal at Fancourt and knowing that I was about to start my studies I decided to take a year off and I accepted the position.

Well if I can say that was it, I fell in love with the overall day to day people interaction and especially being involved with the game I love. One and a half years later I heard about the PGA program and instantly I knew this is what I want to do. Fortunately for me a position became available at Bramble Hill, Assistant Golf Professional and this included the PGA program.

Mark Wilshire the Golf Director of The Links at the time gave me my first opportunity to follow the new dream. I started my program in 2005 under the leadership of Jayde Tannous and fellow apprentices, Neil Tucker, Tyron Farrell and Wynand Myburg. The invaluable support and experience I received lead the way to where I am today.

After graduation I was offered the Pro Shop Manager position at Durban Country Club and Beachwood in late 2008. During 2008 till 2010 I was exposed to numerous high level tournaments namely Men's Open IPT, Senior and Super Senior IPT and the biggest one at the time the 2010 Centenary SA Open. This was my biggest challenge so far as I was appointed to manage and coordinate the merchandise department. Having had the opportunity to be involved with the same level events during my time at Fancourt, I took on the challenge.

Late 2010 I was promoted to Golf Operations Manager overseeing the whole golf department and budget for Durban Country Club and Beachwood Country Club. During that time our budgeted rounds was 42000 per course. Having had 8500 members and trophy events almost every second week I knew I had a big opportunity to establish myself in the Golf Industry. During my time as Golf Operations Manager I managed and co-managed the following events:

- World Amateur Championships (4 Years)
- Inaugural World Club Pro Am Championships (2 Years)
- Volvo Golfers Championships (2013 & 2014) Champions of Champions European Tour
- SA Mid-Amateur IPT

- 5 Sunshine Tour Events (Sun Coast Classic) (2009 – 2013)

It was well known in the industry that Durban Country Club has had problems as a whole Club and even though the challenges were severe, it was a very important part of my growth, both as a person and ultimately the position I now hold.

Being at Durban Country for 7 years, I received a call from Ingrid Diesel asking if I might be interested to relocate to Pezula as Operations Manager and of course this again gave me the opportunity to gain additional experience in the estate golf industry and accepted the offer and started 1 October 2015. Under the leadership of Ingrid, I yet again was fortunate to gain invaluable insight and understanding of the golf business.

Early 2017 I was promoted to General Manager of Pezula Golf Club, Under Ingrid's close watch, I knew that I would only get the General Manager promotion when I was ready for it, and I feel so privileged and honored to have achieved this in such a short time. We run a very active Club, despite the fact that it is a remote destination for many, and I have learnt a great deal in having to manage a seasonal operation, which has its challenges. The Club is a successful one, and I feel that I play a great role in having achieved this.

I have been part of the Golfing Industry just over 19 years from being a Caddy to Executive Management and the reason for this is that the only way to do great work is to love what you do.

In closing, during the last two years I said goodbye to the two mentors who shaped my life. They both passed away very suddenly and I dedicate this nomination to my Dad and Ingrid Diesel - They would be so proud!

With Kindest Regards

Francois de Lange