

2010

# GolfWorks Illinois

## Year-End Summary

In the summer of 2010, the Illinois PGA Foundation launched an innovative work study program to support the professional and academic growth of Illinois youth. The program met with tremendous success, and served as a useful pilot to inform future programmatic efforts.



The Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism  
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
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## GolfWorks Illinois Summer 2010 Pilot Year End Summary

### Overview

In June 2010, the Illinois PGA Foundation welcomed the inaugural class of Illinois youth participating in **GolfWorks Illinois**, a work study program conducted in concert with area golf clubs and facilities. Inspired by a similar initiative of the Metropolitan Golf Association Foundation, an innovative curriculum has been developed to provide a meaningful summer employment opportunity for the student participant and promote the high standards of The PGA of America by:

- Instilling an appreciation of golf and identifying related career paths for the leaders of tomorrow.
- Developing positive role models and building self esteem through personal and professional accomplishment.
- Providing opportunities for students and Illinois golf agencies to interact with and support local community initiatives.
- Instructing students on the financial and operational components of the golf industry.

This past summer, 6 students were selected to participate and placed among of the finest facilities and associations in the State of Illinois including; Westmoreland Country Club in Wilmette, Butler National Golf Club in Oak Brook, The First Tee of Chicago, The Illinois Section PGA, the Kankakee Country Club, and the Illinois Junior Golf Association.

### The Literature

Beyond the success of the Metropolitan Golf Association Foundation's GOLFWORKS program, there has been significant support for the effectiveness of experiential education programs in teaching positive personal and professional skills. A recent survey of 3,300 post-secondary students revealed that most participate in work placements in order to gain related experience and to assist in the making of future career choices (Garavan & Murphy, 2001). In the same study, nearly three-quarters of students who had participated reported gaining specific content-area knowledge and gained soft skills from the experience. Further, two thirds reported that they were better equipped to identify their academic direction and three-quarters reported that it helped them identify their

*Effective work-study programs can play a tremendous role in fostering positive development of young professionals. Those participating in such programs are more likely to attend college, have a job upon graduation from college, and demonstrate stronger leadership skills (Gault & Schlager, 2000).*

*All students participating in the GolfWorks Illinois program demonstrated a significant increase in their personal and professional self-efficacy. They are leaving the program more confident in their abilities and more determined to succeed.*

future career direction. Nearly all (91%) rated their experience as a valuable one (Garavan & Murphy, 2001).

Researchers have also investigated the relationship between participating in work and learning opportunities during post-secondary education and subsequent employment. Studies have found that students with experiential experiences were more likely to have a job upon graduation than those without such experience. There is also evidence work placements support the development of job-related abilities such as communication and teamwork skills (Gault & Schlager, 2000). Such placements are

associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and, more specifically, higher levels of satisfaction with salary and benefits (Gault & Schlager, 2000).

### **Survey**

The literature has concluded that youth development programs (like GolfWorks Illinois) are successful in reaching their goals if program staff are intentional about program goals and continually seek to improve service delivery (Perkins & Noam, 2007). Recognizing the importance of continuous program development, and driven by the desire to provide the highest quality program to Illinois youth, GolfWorks Illinois staff partnered with the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to collect data to be used to assess the effectiveness of the program and to shape future programmatic efforts. Six key domains to be evaluated were identified:

1. The effectiveness of the program in contributing to student's personal self-efficacy (S.E.p.).
2. The effectiveness of the program in improving the student's confidence in professional abilities (S.E.P.).
3. The impact that program participation had on increasing student awareness of needs within the community (C.N.A.).
4. The impact of program participation in fostering an intention to engage community needs beyond the summer experience (C.N.R.).
5. The impact that program participation had on student belief that Golf could be used as a tool to improve local communities (I.G.C.).
6. The perception of the student that the careers of golf are promising employment opportunities (I.G.P.).

Over the course of Summer 2010, pre-test/post-test surveys were distributed to the students at the beginning and end of their summer work experience. The survey instruments were specifically designed to determine the impact that participation in GolfWorks Illinois had on student development. In addition to the surveys, qualitative exit interviews were conducted with students and site preceptors.

## Results

Of the six domains under consideration, the results for two were statistically significant across all group members (high school and college age).

1. There was an increase in self-reported Professional Self-Efficacy for all participants
2. An increase in the interest expressed in the careers of golf.

The results for the remaining 4 domains were mixed, however, in conjunction with the results from the exit interviews; the data are useful in making recommendations for future programmatic efforts.

While these gains in self-efficacy could be easy to trivialize, research supports the notion that strong self-efficacy influences human behavior and personal well-being in a variety of forms. Further, a relationship between efficacy and choices made and courses of action pursued has been demonstrated. Specifically, higher personal and professional self-efficacy has been linked to:

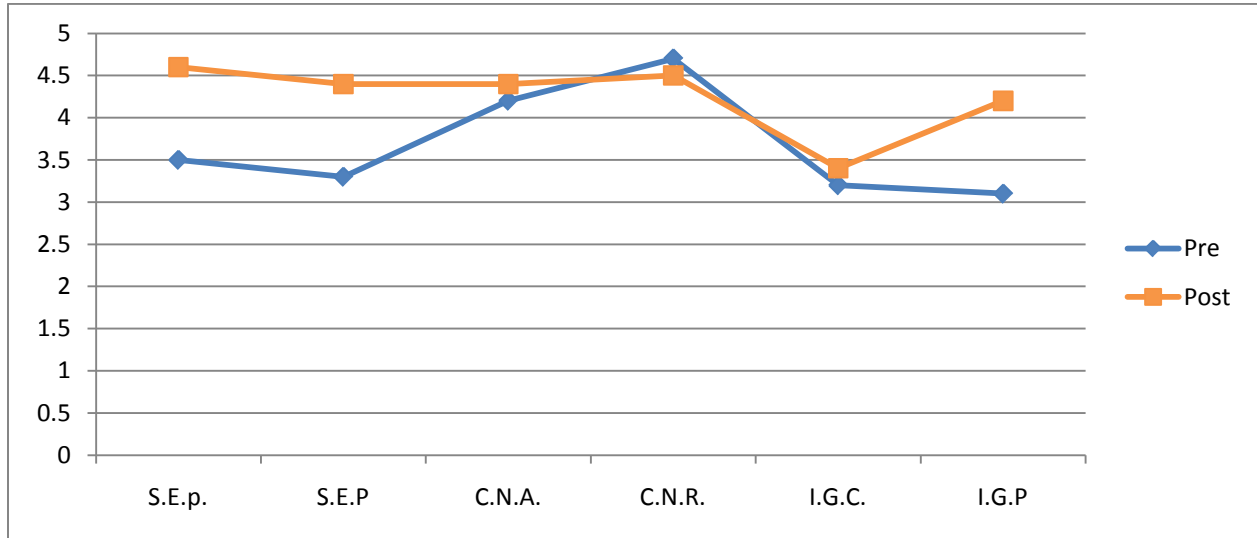
- Lower levels of stress (Davis & Yates, 1982)
- Stronger social and leadership skills (Moe & Zeiss, 1982)
- Decision to enroll in post-secondary education and academic motivation (Lent & Hackett, 1987)
- Higher levels of motivation (Meece, et al, 1990)
- Task accomplishment – challenges are something to be mastered rather than dangers to be avoided. (Dweck & Legett, 1988)
- Likelihood of setting and achieving challenging goals. (Zimmerman, 2000)
- Confidence rebound after failure (Bandura, 1986).

For these reasons, a gain in professional and personal self-efficacy in the summer 2010 participants was important as such results are strong predictors of personal health and the level of accomplishments that participants may one day attain (Maehr & Pintrich, 1993). Enhancing self efficacy is the first step in building young professionals.

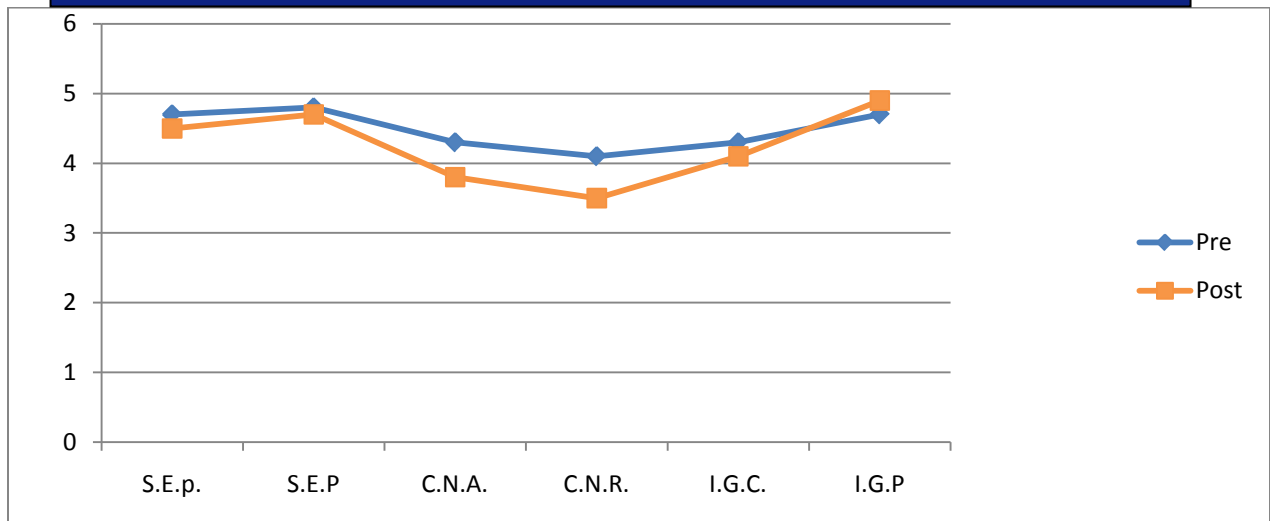
In addition to heightened efficacy, the results revealed that all six GolfWorks Illinois participants had a strong interest in potentially pursuing golf as a professional career. This suggests that GolfWorks staff, along with site preceptors, were successful in introducing students to the business side of golf and in exciting the leaders of tomorrow about the promising careers that can be found in the industry. While

*GolfWorks Illinois staff, along with the site preceptors at Butler National Golf Course, The First Tee of Chicago, The Illinois Junior Golf Association, The Illinois Section PGA, the Kankakee Country Club, and Westmoreland Country Club in Wilmette, all served as excellent mentors and role models. As a result of their participation in the program, 100% of the students expressed an interest in the careers of golf.*

all participants expressed an interest in the golf professions at the conclusion of their experience, the influence was strongest among the younger participants. Such results align with previous findings related to the perceived significance of internships and work study programs being diminished after one or two previous professional experiences (Gower, 2009).



The positive impact of participation in GolfWorks Illinois was most pronounced among the younger participants.



Older participants experienced positive growth, but the data suggests that students with previous internship or work study experience do not benefit to the same extent as those who have not.


## The Next Step

As the program moves towards the 2011 season, it is clear that steps should be taken to strengthen the GolfWorks identity with the high school aged group. Such measures will be cohesive with the original intent of the program, and align with the survey results which demonstrate a greater increase in self reported professional self efficacy for the younger participants. Recommendations include:

- A. Developing a clear timeline for recruiting (February-March), hiring (March – April), and placement decisions (April – May)
- B. Clearly defined parameters related to desirable participant characteristics.
  - Age
  - S.E.S.
  - Diversity
- C. Implementation of a ½ or full day training program for student participants.
  - Clarify goals of GolfWorks
  - Exposure to training topics such as Goals & Objectives, Generational Communication, Networking and Stages of Development (Experiential Learning)
  - Brainstorm on ideas for Community Service Projects.
  - Develop a firm schedule of responsibilities for the student in advance of arrival.
  - Still allow flexibility for individual student interests
  - Allow flexibility for new opportunities that may arise
  - Expectations are clear for both parties involved
  - Continue to develop tools to evaluate program.
- D. Develop measures to support students in evaluating progress toward goal development.
  - Multiple opportunities, standardized forms, and peer support networks.
  - Responsibility of conducting evaluations to rest with GolfWorks staff and preceptors.
- E. Develop of an Internship Handbook with:
  - Development of handbook with:
  - Dates of employment
  - Vacation policies
  - Recommended practices
  - Supplemental forms

## Summary

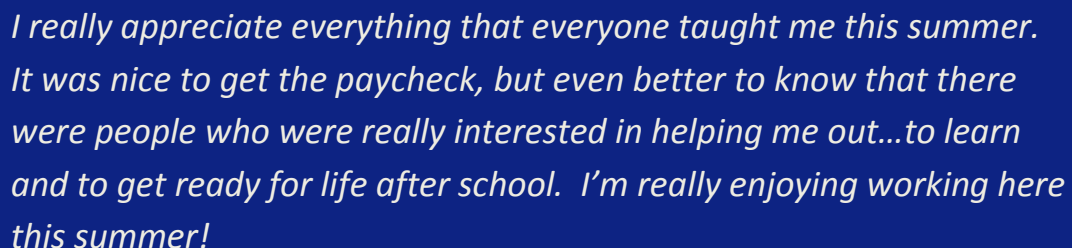
In the Spring of 2010, the Illinois PGA Foundation, University of Illinois Department of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism and selected clubs and facilities partnered to use golf as a vehicle to promote personal and professional skills development for youth in the State of Illinois. The resulting "GolfWorks Illinois" program was successful in placing six high school and college aged students with top professionals and management in highly regarded golf clubs and associations. Students were surveyed (pre and post), and it was suggested that the experience was successful in improving self efficacy of the participants (particularly high school aged students) as well as heightening interest in golf as a professional career.



*"My summer experience was great...I learned about business, myself, and how to work with others. I feel like 'I can do it now', that I've proven that I have what it takes. I'm excited to see what else I can learn next summer."*

*-GolfWorks Illinois 2010 Summer Participant*

In that spirit, the program will begin the recruitment of high school aged students and matching them with appropriate golf organizations in early – mid spring 2011. Further, the selected participants will be asked to participate in a ½ day training seminar where program goals, policies, and professional development strategies will be discussed prior to their summer experience. The impact will be measured in terms of the six key domains identified for the Summer 2010 pilot. Measurements will take place prior to and after the students experience. Finally, qualitative exit interviews will again be conducted with students and site preceptors with the focus on gaining insight on contributions to the participating clubs along with areas for improving program delivery.



*I really appreciate everything that everyone taught me this summer. It was nice to get the paycheck, but even better to know that there were people who were really interested in helping me out...to learn and to get ready for life after school. I'm really enjoying working here this summer!*

*- GolfWorks Illinois 2010 Summer Participant*