

TURNING THE Love of the Game INTO A CAREER

By: Kellsey Miller

Ashleigh Anderson, *Florida State*, fell in love with golf at an early age. She was first introduced to the sport through the Orlando Minority Youth Golf Association, a program designed to introduce inner-city kids to the sport, many of whom would have not had the chance to learn to play otherwise. Golf became her passion and today she is making a career out of what she loves, while giving back to the golf community through her job with the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA).

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Although her official title is senior coordinator, tournaments and member programs, Brother Anderson jokes that she is a "jack of all trades" in her department. One role is to serve as the regional tournament coordinator and national tournament director for the LPGA's Teaching and Club Professional membership. Teaching and Club Professionals (T & CP) are women who are within the golf industry and directly influence the game as teaching professionals, coaches and golf professionals at clubs and facilities around the world. The LPGA certifies these women through a golf education curriculum, which is one of the leading and most sought after programs in the industry. The program educates members on how to teach the game; effectively manage golf facilities; and coach successful high school and college golf teams. Anderson is currently pursuing LPGA T & CP certification.

In addition, she is responsible for coordinating promotional programs including the LPGA Front Row Experience presented by Michelob Ultra and LPGA Tour Junior Golf Clinics held at several LPGA Tour events each year. Since her position requires a cross-section of functions, she learns something new every day. Anderson also finds time to work as a Junior Golf Instructor for the Orlando Minority Youth Golf Association and youth mentor for Tee-Lo Golf.

Very few people realize that golf is a \$76 billion industry, which is higher than the motion picture and recording industries combined. The industry not only includes the LPGA, PGA Tour, PGA of America, but golf clubs and resorts, retail and equipment companies, and more. The golf industry also donates more than \$3.5 billion annually to charities across the country, which is more than any other sport. Brother Anderson says the charitable aspect is part of what makes her proud to work in the industry.

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While there are too many experiences during her career with the LPGA to name a favorite, Anderson has had the chance to meet many influential people and big names in the golf industry, including Nancy Lopez—who was one of her golf heroes growing up.

Breaking into the sports industry is difficult and highly competitive; Brother Anderson notes that candidates who are passionate about sports and have some experience in the industry receive preference. She also says internships are key, especially for candidates with broader majors such as sports management. If you have trouble finding an internship, but played a sport in college—whether it be on your school's team or just an intramural—include it on your resume. Anderson played on the women's golf team at Florida State and interned for First Tee, a youth development program dedicated to providing young people the opportunity to develop through golf and character education. Also, consider volunteering for a sporting event or program. This shows potential employers that "you are not just a fan, but a committed candidate looking to create a career in the industry," said Anderson. ▲



Ashleigh Anderson, *Florida State*, is senior coordinator of tournaments and member programs for the LPGA.



Anderson (second from left) with several coworkers.