

# Royce Brook's Academy of Golf

## 2006 Instructors

### **Mike Sparks, PGA** **Director of Golf & Head Golf Professional**

Mike is an award winning PGA member who was elected to membership in the PGA of America in 1988. He has been Royce Brook's Director of Golf & Head Golf Professional since 2004.

In 2005, the New Jersey Section of the PGA named him their **PGA Golf Professional of the Year** for the second time in three years. This is the highest honor given to a PGA Professional. It is based on overall performance, leadership, and service to the PGA Section as well as image and ability to inspire fellow professionals in the promotion of the game. He was recognized in 2003 as their Horton Smith Award winner for dedication and outstanding contributions to the PGA Education Program, was named their Junior Golf Leader in 2002, and the Merchandiser of the Year in 2000.

Mike is currently the Vice-President of the New Jersey PGA and has been a member of their Board of Directors since 1999.

As an instructor, Mike has had success with players from beginners to club professionals. His philosophy is to teach each person individually as there is no one perfect golf swing for every person. He wants his students to leave enjoying the game more and having a better understanding of what they need to do to play better golf.

Prior to coming to Royce Brook, Mike served as the Head Golf Professional at New Jersey National Golf Club, Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, and Picatinny Arsenal Golf Club.

### **Bill Balash, PGA**

Bill has been a member of the PGA since 1989. A native of Pittsburgh, PA, Bill now calls Hobe Sound, FL his home and spends the winter months as Director of Instruction at Heritage Ridge Golf Club in Hobe Sound.

He was a long time member of the ESPN Golf Schools (formerly Nicklaus/Flick Golf Schools) serving as a lead instructor. Bill also served as International Director of Instruction for Golden Bear Golf, Inc. providing Nicklaus/Flick Certified Training and instruction support for the Golden Bear Golf Centers domestically and the Jack Nicklaus Golf Centers & Academies abroad.

Other highlights to Bill's career include Director of Instruction for Golf Digest's Golf Workshop, Hong Kong, Education Faculty Member for the PGA of America, Director of Instruction for the PGA National Resort & Golf Club, Palm Beach Gardens, FL.

In 1991, Bill was recognized as the SE Chapter South Florida PGA "Teacher of the Year" and in 1993 was nominated by the South Florida Section PGA for the honor.

Most recently, Bill has co-founded CorpraGolf, Inc. a corporate golf instruction company and he has begun work on his first golf instruction book.

Bill is excited to be returning to Royce Brook's Academy of Golf staff for his second year as an Instructor and is looking forward to another exciting golf season.

### **Anthony Latham, PGA**

Anthony has been a PGA professional since 1995. Before joining the staff here at Royce Brook, he was the GM / Head Professional at the Ewing Golf Center, Head Professional at Jumping Brook CC and Teaching Professional at Greenacres CC, all in New Jersey. A teacher with over 16 years of experience, Anthony has directed countless schools, lessons and clinics, and has developed a superior reputation as a teacher of ladies and juniors – especially at the beginner level. He established the home for Trenton Junior Golf, Inc. in 2004, and was instrumental in bringing a First Tee Chapter to the city of Trenton. He is currently establishing both a 9-Hole Woman's Instructional and 18 hole Competitive Group at

Royce Brook's Academy of Golf.

Anthony has worked with many of the areas top amateur players including former NJSGA Women's Champion Carolyn Forcina, but most notably Donna Anderson, who at the age of 16, became the youngest ever Champion of the Women's Trenton District Golf Association. He also is credited with the improvement of players on The College of New Jersey's Golf Team as well as several of Mercer County's high school standouts.

Anthony has been nominated for several teaching and community service awards and still plays a limited competitive schedule in NJPGA and NJSGA Events. He currently serves as The Director of Player Development for Trenton Junior Golf Inc., is on the Board of Directors for The First Tee of Greater Trenton and is the head instructor for several golf groups based in Trenton such as "Women with a Swing" and "The Horizon Health Care Employees Golf Association".

### Martin Nowicki, PGA

Martin has been a PGA member since 1996. This will be his first season as a member of the Royce Brook teaching staff. For the past two years, he has been a teaching professional at The Golf Club of Chelsea Piers in New York City. He has also worked as a Master Instructor for Jim McLean Golf School at The Doral Golf Resort and Spa in Miami.

Martin has been named by **Golf Magazine** as a "Top 400 teachers in the United States," five different times and recognized by **Golf Digest** as a "Top 20 Teacher in New York." In addition, the Central New York PGA honored him with their "**Teacher of the Year Award**", while working as the Head Golf Professional at The Links at Erie Village in East Syracuse, New York.

He has worked for or studied under seven "Top 100 Instructors" in the country including Jim Hardy and Jim McLean. He believes there is no one way to swing the golf club, as each person is different thus must be taught accordingly.

A fine player in his own right, Martin placed 10<sup>th</sup> in the 2003 Philadelphia Open, was the winner of the 2000 Metropolitan PGA Pro-Pro Championship and was a two-time captain of the St. Bonaventure University Golf Team.

### Warren Raatz, PGA

Warren Raatz has been a class A member of the PGA since 1993. Warren is returning to Royce Brook for his sixth season as an Instructor for both golf schools and private lessons. In the winter months, Warren occupies his time by teaching at Palm Beach Polo in West Palm Beach, Florida. During this six-year duration, Warren has been both the Director of Instruction and lead instructor for schools, clinics and private lessons. Prior to 2000, Warren was a lead instructor at PGA National, a position held since 1993.

A teacher's teacher, Warren has been involved as editor and photographer for numerous books with Mike Adams including: "The Laws of Golf", "Play Better Golf for Men", "Play Better Golf for Women", and "Play Better Golf for Seniors". He has made appearances on the Golf Channel, CNN Golf Tips, and can be found in both books and instructional videos.

A former mini tour player, Warren has worked with tour players, future tour players and golfers of all levels from beginners on up.

