STEVE PARKER'S BLUEPRINT

Enhancing the Value of PGA Membership. Driving Brand Excellence.

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Candidate for PGA Secretary 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every Officer decision has to answer one question: **how does this benefit our PGA Members or PGA Sections?** Standards drive brand. Brand drives compensation. Compensation is the return our Members have earned and aren't getting. Every principle here serves that chain.

Where We Stand

80%	National contributes roughly 20% through ADP, Strategic Funding, and Partnerships. Our Sections / Executive Directors raise the other 80% of the budgets themselves. Sections are doing four-fifths or 80% of the dollars of member service on their own.

The Record Shows I'm the Only Candidate with a Track Record of Measurable and Meaningful Impacts for our Members

Purses. I pushed for the board-approved schedule that grows the PGA Professional Championship from $715,000 in 2024 to $1,020,000 by 2028. Senior PPC from $335,000 to $510,000. Assistants' Championship from $165,000 to $255,000.

The WORKS Fellowship. It was proposed to be eliminated. I fought to save it. Eighty-nine percent of Fellows land jobs in the golf industry. Eighty-three percent land full-time positions.

The Assistants' Championship. Eligibility was limited to A-8 and B-8 Associates. I worked to expand it to every post-Level 1 Associate. Same standard. Wider opportunity.

If the money doesn't reach the Member, none of this is real.

What I Would Do

#	PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICE
One	Transparency Creates Trust	Members hear it from us first. And they hear why, not just what.
Two	Build the Standard, Then the Brand	Codify what PGA expertise means. Then tie it to compensation.
Three	The Future PGA Professional	Fix the pipeline. Grow the client base. Build around what only a human can do.
Four	Fiscal Integrity	No agenda item voted the same meeting it is presented.
Five	A Modern Business Structure	A taxable subsidiary that returns commercial value to Members.

The First Twelve Months

I have every intention of supporting Nathan and Eric's vision for our Association, I simply want to bring additional ideas that bring value to our Members, our Sections, and our Brand. Platforms are talk. Officers are judged on results. Here's what I ask you to hold me accountable for.

COMMITMENT	PRINCIPLE
No agenda item is presented and voted in the same meeting. Independent review precedes any major financial commitment.	Four
Convene a working group of head professionals, associates, and education staff to design and measure effective work-experience as part of achieving membership	Three
Order-of-communication protocol in place: District Directors, Section Officers, Members — before any press release.	One
Ensure an independent study is completed into the tax and legal evaluation of a wholly owned taxable subsidiary, with findings reported to the membership.	Five
Publish the Section funding ratio annually — what our 41 Sections spend on member service against what national returns.	Four
Seat Section Business Operations in commercial deal development, at negotiation rather than notification.	Five
Establish an off-course conversion framework with measurable targets.	Three

The Ask

The next six years will decide whether we become a genuinely member-first Association or keep serving National first, Members second. The money is here. The assets are here. What's been missing is the discipline to hold every decision to that standard before we vote, not after.

I am asking for your trust — not just your vote.

I. WHY I AM RUNNING

THE CHALLENGE	Our commercial assets are worth multiples of what they were a generation ago. The structure for returning that value to Members needs to be our primary focus.
THE NUMBER	**30 Years** a PGA Member — Section President, District 5 Director, Tournament Committee Chair
MY COMMITMENT	**Protect the Member's interest in every room where the value gets allocated.**

I've been a PGA Member for thirty years. The challenges this Association debates in boardrooms are challenges I live on the lesson tee, in the pro shop, and in conversations with Members every day.

I served through the chairs of the Northern Ohio Section from 2015 to 2021, including President 2020 to 2021. District 5 Director from 2022 to 2025. Currently I serve on the Budget and Properties Committees and chair the Tournament Committee.

I'm not running because I need this to enhance my resume, complete a career or give me a moment in the spotlight. I'm running because I've been in the Boardroom, and our process needs to improve now. I'm the only candidate uniquely qualified to lead the charge for change.

Here's what I know from serving as a Director:

- Our commercial assets have grown dramatically. The structure for returning that value to Members has not grown proportionately.
- Programs that matter to Members and Sections need someone willing to fight for them when they're threatened.
- Trust among Sections, Executive Directors, and Members has to be rebuilt. Transparency is the fastest way.

The next six years will decide whether we become a genuinely member-first Association or continue serving brand first, Members second.

I'm running to protect our Members' interests and time after time; I've led the charge to enhance our members lives and have successfully seen my initiatives adopted.

II. THREE EXAMPLES OF HOW I LEAD

THE CHALLENGE	Any candidate can write a platform. The question is what a candidate did when the right answer was the harder one.
THE NUMBER	**$715K → $1.02M** PGA Professional Championship purse, 2024 to 2028, on the board-approved schedule
MY COMMITMENT	**Judge me on the record, not the language.**

1. Member Championship Purses

Purses had been sitting at a fraction of what this Association's assets could support. I pushed for change. The board-approved four-year schedule now grows the PGA Professional Championship from $715,000 in 2024 to $1,020,000 by 2028. Senior PPC from $335,000 to $510,000. Assistants' Championship from $165,000 to $255,000. This is measurable and meaningful leadership that enhances our Member's lives.

2. The WORKS Fellowship

Staff proposed eliminating the WORKS Fellowship. It's part of the pipeline that will shape our profession for the next twenty years. I fought to save it. Eighty-nine percent of Fellows land jobs in the golf industry. Eighty-three percent land full-time. That's not a program you cut. This is forward thinking, committed leadership that brings value to our Sections.

3. The Assistants' Championship

The Assistants' Championship is the premier developmental event for the professionals building the next generation of our membership. Eligibility was limited to A-8 and B-8 Associates. The Associates who most needed the platform were being excluded from it. I worked to expand eligibility to every post-Level 1 Associate. It changed. Same standard. Wider opportunity. This is common-sense leadership that protects the rights and privileges of our Members and Associates.

If the benefit doesn't reach the Member, none of this is real.

III. THE MEMBER AND SECTION FIRST STANDARD

Every organization has a governing philosophy, stated or not. Here's mine for the PGA of America:

Every decision should answer one question: How does this benefit our PGA Members or PGA Sections?

It applies to governance, budgets, program funding, commercial partnerships, and asset deployment. To where we invest, what and who we protect, and what we change.

This standard creates friction. Board Members have to ask questions staff and commercial partners won't want answered. Every vote gets weighed against member benefit, not institutional convenience.

That's why this blueprint matters.

PRINCIPLE ONE · Transparency Creates Trust

THE CHALLENGE	Members find out about decisions that affect their Association from trade publications before they hear from their own leadership.
THE NUMBER	41 Sections briefed through their own officers before a single press release goes out
MY COMMITMENT	**Members hear it from us first. And they hear why, not just what.**

Transparency is the foundation of every other principle here. Without it, Members can't evaluate their leadership. The Member First standard is unenforceable and Governance accountability is impossible.

Communications: Members Before Headlines

What I've heard from Members for years isn't a request for more communication. It's a demand for honest, timely, trustworthy communication. That's not a communication issue. **It's an issue of priority**. The fix isn't more emails — it's a different order of operations. **Our Members and Associates MUST be the priority**. No significant decision reaches a trade publication before it reaches our Members. The chain is District Directors, then Section Officers, then Members. In that order.

Financial Transparency

Our Members deserve to know the financial performance of every major asset the Association owns. This includes PGA Golf Club, our Championship portfolio, Commercial partnerships, Licensing agreements and what our 501(c)(6) status means for how commercial revenue is structured and deployed. This can be done at a high-level perspective and under no means should it be granular. That isn't what fiduciary responsibility is about.

Governance Accountability

Accountability means Officers answer for outcomes, not just intentions. Retrospective analysis of major financial decisions — not to assign blame, but to build better processes. The willingness to evaluate and admit when a program fails to deliver.

It also means a board that functions as a board. Directors cannot exercise judgment without thoroughly vetting all of the pertinent information prior to a decision. No governance structure works when material terms arrive after the vote. Documents circulated far enough in advance to be read and understood. Independent review before major financial commitments. Minutes of every board meeting need to be recorded and distributed to Section Officers and Executive Directors. This creates an ongoing record of activity and initiatives that can be measured. Dissenting votes should be recorded rather than saying all votes are unanimous. These are the difference between a board that governs and a board that ratifies.

Explaining the why — not just the what — is the standard I am committing to.

THE CHALLENGE	The PGA credential means something different to every employer, golfer, and facility manager who encounters it. No marketing campaign fixes that. Only standards do.
THE NUMBER	**30,000+** Members — and no codified definition of what expertise in our profession actually means
MY COMMITMENT	**Codify the standard, then connect credential level explicitly and measurably to compensation.**

The PGA brand is one of the most recognized in all of sport. Recognition is not the same as value. To some employers the credential signals expertise and trust. To others it signals a credential that is widely held and variably meaningful. That inconsistency is the brand problem, and no marketing campaign fixes it.

Professional Standards

A CPA commands a premium because the market understands exactly what a CPA knows and the standard they are held to. We have 30,000-plus Members and no unified answer to what expertise in this profession looks like. I am proposing:

- Membership requirements tied to demonstrable expertise across play, rules, teaching and coaching, golf operations, and tournament operations. With a floor — even where mastery in one area offsets limited expertise in another.
- Meaningful continuing education. Genuine professional development, not checkboxes.
- We need to ensure knowledge based education, coupled with hands on experience to build a thoroughly prepared membership.

Playing Ability Test

It's the standard that truly separates us in the industry and it must stay and not be diluted.

Education

Executive Management, Golf Operations, and Teaching & Coaching are three distinct career paths. Our education model too often treats every PGA Professional the same. Members need pathways that deepen as their careers evolve. Advanced training in leadership, finance, HR, agronomy, technology, and governance. A unified, world-class curriculum built by our best and brightest PGA Professionals before independent academies, equipment companies, and AI platforms fill that space.

Employer Value Proposition

We offer employers job boards, ExecuSearch, compensation surveys, and Career Consultants. Useful tools, but not a value proposition. A value proposition answers one question: why should an employer pay more for a PGA Professional than for someone without the credential? We must connect credential level — Specialized, Certified, Master Professional — explicitly and measurably to compensation outcome, so the case can be made in the industry's own language.

Build the standard. Then own the market.

THE CHALLENGE	Two problems are arriving at once. Market share of facilities employing a PGA Member is hovering around 50% and we have a supply/demand imbalance.
MY COMMITMENT	**Demand a rigorous education standard and rebuild the profession around what only a human expert can do.**

The greatest threat facing PGA Members is not AI, participation decline, or private equity. It is irrelevance. And we are at risk of building it ourselves.

AI is absorbing the administrative and entry-level instructional work that once required a credentialed professional. Private equity has deployed over $5.5 billion into golf in eighteen months, consolidating courses and management companies at a pace this industry has never seen — optimizing for EBITDA and exit multiples, not for the PGA Professional's career.

Supply, demand, and relevance are one problem. They need one answer.

Fix the Pipeline: Mentoring Associates

The standard matters — I believe that deeply. But a standard almost no one can meet is a barrier, not a standard. Mentorship isn't only about associates becoming Members. It's about Members becoming leaders. And it's about thirty years of institutional knowledge not walking out the door every time a veteran retires without a structured handoff. Rather than build another initiative, I'll expand what already works. Regional leadership academies through the Sections. Sustained, intentional mentoring relationships rather than one-time events.

Grow the Client Base: Off-Course to On-Course Conversion

Increasing the supply of professionals means nothing if the demand for them doesn't grow with it. Right now, the fastest-growing part of golf is happening indoors. At Topgolf bays. At simulator studios. At entertainment venues. More Americans now engage with the game there than on a golf course.

That is the single largest opportunity in front of our membership, and almost none of it is being converted. Those players are not golfers yet. They have hit a ball, enjoyed it, and have no idea what comes next — no course, no instructor, no path in. **Converting them is not a marketing problem. It is a PGA Professional problem, and it is the one growth engine that pays Members directly.**

Every off-course player who becomes an on-course golfer becomes a lesson, a round, a membership, a customer for life. Multiplied across 41 Sections, another set of jobs for the associates we are working to bring through the pipeline. It is also the precise answer to automation. A launch monitor can measure a swing. It cannot be the human being who hands someone the game and changes their life. The moment of conversion is the moment a machine cannot replicate, and it belongs to us.

I will make off-course conversion an explicit strategic priority. Partnership structures with off-course operators that route new players to PGA Professionals rather than around them. Section-level conversion programs with measurable targets. Training that equips Members to meet a first-time player where they actually are.

Human Expertise as a Competitive Advantage

We've spent twenty years training Members to do what a machine can now do better, while neglecting what only a human expert can. The correction:

- A teaching and coaching curriculum built around what AI cannot replicate.
- Revenue and financial management training that positions PGA Professionals as business partners to facility owners, including private equity owners.
- Mentoring workshops taught by our best, brightest, and award-winning Professionals.
- Measurable data linking Specialized, Certified, and Master Professional status to compensation.
- AI literacy training so every Member treats these tools as force multipliers, not replacements.

PGA REACH: The Pipeline in Action

REACH is where many new people enter the game. PGA HOPE has served more than 65,000 Veterans in ten years. PGA Jr. League has funded 6,000 scholarships through a $7.6 million investment, building the pipeline of lifelong golfers and lifelong clients. The WORKS Fellowship — which I fought to save — places 89% of its Fellows in golf industry jobs where they are having positive impacts across our industry. These are not line items to trim when budgets get tight. I will protect and expand all three, with WORKS Fellowship expansion to all 41 Sections funded through the commercial subsidiary described in Principle Five.

A launch monitor can measure a swing. It cannot hand someone the game. That moment is ours.

PRINCIPLE FOUR · Fiscal Integrity

THE CHALLENGE	Some of our Spectator Championships have historically shown financial losses. Dollars have also been allocated in ways that haven't leveraged benefit for our Members or Sections.
MY COMMITMENT	**Every financial decision presented will first be held to the standard of how this benefits our Members, our Sections, and/or our Brand.**

Fiscal integrity means something specific. Every dollar this Association earns is deployed in service of the mission. Every dollar it spends MUST be justified by the benefit it delivers to Members.

Responsible Board Stewardship

The PGA Championship paid a record $20.5 million purse in 2026. The Ryder Cup media deal runs through 2033. PGA Golf Club, licensing rights, and brand equity round out a portfolio that has grown substantially in value across a generation. Our Members haven't seen value commensurate with that growth.

- Financial transparency on every major asset — what it costs, what it generates, what the net position is annually.
- Independent review of major financial commitments before they are made. Not audits after the money is spent.
- Protection of the long-term prestige of the PGA Championship and Ryder Cup over short-term revenue.

Strategic Investment

Investment in member education, mentoring, and professional development produces compounding returns. Investment in administrative overhead, and programs without clear member benefit does not.

Growth in this Association's commercial value has to show up where Members can see it, or it isn't real.

THE CHALLENGE	Mission and commerce sit inside a single 501(c)(6). That creates legal risk, limits investment potential, and caps how much commercial value can reach Members.
MY COMMITMENT	**Evaluate a wholly owned taxable subsidiary — the PGA Tour Enterprises model — with after-tax profit funding member championships, REACH, and mentoring.**

The PGA of America has held its 501(c)(6) status since December 1959. That's a privilege and a responsibility. It also carries structural limits on how we deploy commercial assets for Members. Our core mission is a nonprofit mission. The activities that support it — championship management, licensing, media rights, real estate — increasingly function as a commercial enterprise. Mixing the two inside one entity creates inurement roadblocks, legal risk and makes it harder to attract the partnerships and capital that could accelerate member benefits. The solution is structural separation, not abandonment of the mission.

Evaluate a Wholly Owned Taxable Subsidiary

The PGA Tour has already shown us the model. PGA Tour Enterprises houses the tour's commercial assets while the nonprofit retained its mission, without retroactive tax on those assets. The structure:

- The PGA of America keeps its 501(c)(6) status and mission.
- A wholly owned C-corporation houses revenue generating assets and commercial operations including spectator championships, commercial rights, licensing, sponsorship, PGA Golf Club, and PGA Coach
- The subsidiary pays corporate income tax on net income. After-tax profits can flow back to the nonprofit parent as tax-free dividends. General and administrative expenses will be allocated. It also allows us to realize losses from certain Championships, PGA Coach expenses, and donations to REACH, reducing our taxable profit.
- The subsidiary can attract outside investment in ways the nonprofit cannot. All intercompany transactions at arm's length and fully documented.

This isn't unprecedented. PGA Tour Enterprises is the direct peer model. AARP operates AARP Services Inc. the same way. ASAE has published extensive guidance on this exact structure for professional associations. The critical guardrail is the IRS prohibition on inurement. Any structure would be designed by qualified tax and legal experts. Absolute prohibition on self-dealing. Full transparency to the membership.

My goal isn't to change what the PGA of America is. My goal is solely to build the financial capacity to do more of what we should do best — serve the PGA Members and Sections.

Ryder Cup — Protecting the Asset and Unlocking Its Value

Giving credit to all those who have served our Association before us, their leadership helped create the tremendous assets the PGA of America enjoys today. With that success comes a fiduciary responsibility to protect those assets, continually assess their value, and consider whether there are opportunities to create even greater long-term value for PGA Members and Sections.

The Ryder Cup is one of our greatest assets, but as I mentioned during our in-room conversation, it also carries vulnerabilities that could jeopardize its future financial success for the Association. At the same time, the PGA of

America continues to face scrutiny over Ryder Cup operations and questions about the effectiveness of its Ryder Cup Task Force—issues that can create unnecessary risk to both the event and our PGA Brand.

With Bethpage producing record revenues, and with the golf ecosystem changing rapidly, I believe the PGA Board has a fiduciary responsibility to understand what this asset is worth in today's marketplace. The Board should empower CEO Terry Clark to engage PGA TOUR leadership and determine whether there is interest in purchasing all or a portion of the PGA of America's interest in the Ryder Cup. **Exploring the opportunity does not commit us to selling the Ryder Cup; it gives the Board the information necessary to make an informed decision about one of our most valuable assets.**

If a transaction were ultimately determined to be in the best interests of the Association, I would advocate exploring the placement of the after-tax proceeds into a professionally managed endowment within an appropriate for-profit structure. Rather than consuming the principal, the objective would be to preserve and grow it while creating a sustainable annual source of investment income.

Combined with other commercial revenue-producing activities, that income could help the for-profit enterprise generate resources that ultimately support the PGA of America, its 41 Sections, and our PGA Members. Properly structured with tax and legal counsel, this could diversify our revenue base, reduce our dependence on championship revenues, and give the Association greater flexibility to invest directly in Member and Section priorities.

The objective isn't to sell the Ryder Cup. The objective is to understand its value, protect the PGA of America from future risk, and determine whether an extraordinary asset created by generations of PGA Members can be transformed into permanent financial security for generations of PGA Members to come.

Connecting the Commercial Team to Section Business Operations

There is a structural and operational gap between the national Commercial team and the Section Business Operations team. Sections are the infrastructure through which commercial value actually reaches the working PGA Professional. Too often they are the last to know — included after a deal is signed rather than consulted before it is structured. That is not a failure of either team. It is a failure of structure. The gap between them is where member value gets lost. I am proposing a formal relationship built into the deal-making process from the beginning:

- SBO consultation in commercial business development. Input during negotiation, not notification after execution.
- Explicit Section-level benefit components in deal structures — revenue sharing, co-branded programs, local activation budgets.
- Annual partnership reviews measuring not just national revenue, but what each deal produces for Sections and our Members.
- Sections and PGA Professionals positioned as the delivery mechanism when a national sponsor activates a program — creating direct revenue for Members and direct benefit for our partners.

The money exists. The question is whether the will to direct it toward Members exists too.

IV. MY LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

I want to be specific about what I am committing to. Not as aspirations, but as standards I expect to be held to.

Integrity

Integrity requires telling you the things that don't reflect well on me, not only the things that do. An Officer with integrity dissents on the record when a decision fails the Member First standard, and explains why.

Transparency

No significant decision reaches a trade publication before it reaches our Members. ***Why before wha***t. District Directors, then Section Officers, then Members — in that order, well before any press release.

Value-Driven Decision Making

Every decision I participate in as an Officer will be filtered through one question***: How does this benefit the PGA Member?*** I will ask it when the answer is uncomfortable. When it creates friction with staff. When it slows a process, someone wants moved quickly. If a decision cannot answer it clearly and honestly, I will vote against it.

Collaboration

I have great respect for the Officers, the National Board, and the staff of this Association. Collaboration doesn't mean agreement. It means engaging seriously with every perspective being voiced. Explaining my reasoning when I disagree. Building coalitions around positions I believe are right and in the best interest of our Members and our Association. The Assistants' Championship eligibility work is what that produces — shared commitment to a principle that widened opportunity across the profession.

The role of Secretary requires experience, perspective, and proven leadership to ensure the Board delivers real, tangible, and measurable value to the PGA Membership. That is exactly what I bring to this opportunity.

V. CONCLUSION

This Association was founded in 1916 by golf professionals who believed the game deserved qualified, skilled, dedicated stewards — and that those stewards deserved an organization that fought for their interests. One hundred and ten years later, that mission matters more than ever.

It requires leadership willing to say the uncomfortable things. To name governance failures without looking away. To fight for member championship purses when it would be easier to accept the current purses. To widen eligibility on a championship that mattered to the Members most excluded from it. To examine an agreement others approved without reading it and admit publicly the terms weren't what they should have been.

That is the leadership I am offering. Honest, persistent, and relentlessly focused on one question: how does this benefit the PGA Member or the Sections?

I am Steve Parker. PGA Master Professional. Director of Instruction at Firestone Country Club. Northern Ohio PGA Section. Past Section President. Past District 5 Director. Tournament Committee Chair. Budget and Properties Committee Member. 526 NOPGA Members and Associates sent me here because they believe this credential should mean something again.

Enhancing the Value of PGA Membership. Driving Brand Excellence.

I am asking for your trust — not just your vote. I'm asking you to join me in enacting this blueprint and making our Association better than anyone thought it could be.

Steve Parker: Candidate for PGA Secretary 2026