

# KIRK OGURI of Pete's Golf

## Named MET PGA Teacher of the Year



By John J. Glozek, Jr.

*Kirk Oguri, PGA, has had a strong relationship with Pete's Golf for over 20 years. He had brought a unique perspective by being a competitive player, golf instructor, and a club fitter. It was only natural that he joined the team at Pete's Golf Shop in 2011. His expertise in the golf swing and technology made him a perfect fit. He takes pride in his passion for golf equipment, and it shows in his reputation as a leader in the Metropolitan NY area as a club fitting expert. He has helped golfers from Tour players, local PGA Professionals, top amateurs to novices find the best golf equipment that matches their specific games.*

**Kirk Oguri:** I remember the first time I saw Jimmy Conway of Pine Hills hit a golf ball and I was like, wow! I remember thinking, wow that is how you could actually hit a golf ball. I really started to love it. I really was just a recreational golfer. At the time I loved music and baseball. I loved music. I could remember, when I was into music I had to go past Bethpage State Park everyday and the bug hit me. I knew at that time this is what I wanted to do.

**John Glozek Jr:** And you did it quite well. Let's talk about the late 90s early 2000s because that was quite a time for you.

**KO:** 1999 was my first competitive year playing competitive golf in this area. My first big tournament was the Long Island Open at Bethpage. I wound up losing to Mark Mielke in a playoff. I just remember the support of all of the people I had. It was the first time I kind of made a statement and I said to myself yeah I think I'm going to stick around here and play.

**JG:** When did you finally turn pro and teach here in the Met Section?

**KO:** It took a while but I spent some time teaching at Crab Meadow and Dix Hills and then I was at the Spring Rock Golf Center.

**JG:** You're now here at Pete's Golf. What is your involvement here from the perspective of a player, teacher, and clubfitter?

**KO:** Originally I was a customer here. Ever since I was 17 years old this is where I got all of my stuff done. I was always tinkering with equipment. I always loved that part of it. I have known these guys at Pete's Golf for a long time — I guess almost 30 years. We have always had a nice relationship and they have always been very nice to me.

After I left Spring Rock Golf Center in 2011 I was looking for something else. At the time I was teaching at a range where it just felt like I had done it for a long time. There was an opportunity for one, to work with Shawn Baker at the Greens in Melville who is one of my close friends and someone who was always there for me. And then Pete and Woody were like, you're always here, you're always tinkering with stuff, this is exactly what we are looking for too. So I came on board here, started teaching in the off season and then became a clubfitter here. Now I already had a lot of experience as it comes to golf clubs, but to actually be a fitter at a facility like this this was my first time. To be here I have been given the opportunity to test a lot of equipment and to further my career as an equipment specialist along with being an instructor. It has allowed myself and other pros in the area to really be innovative.

**JG:** Talk a little bit about balancing your schedule between Pete's Golf, the Greens, and playing.

**KO:** The majority of what I do is playing, teaching and coaching. My time here at Pete's Golf is predominately in the off season of course. When the season starts I am at The Greens probably seventy percent of the time. It breaks out this way — when I'm at Pete's, I'm teaching and fitting, and when I'm at The Greens, I'm teaching and helping out with events. And, of course, everything still revolves around the Met Section events playing schedule.

**JG:** How has being here at Pete's Golf, especially with all of the equipment they have here, helped you as a player and a teacher?

**KO:** I think it has really opened up my eyes as a player and an instructor. Understanding fitting equipment, not only to that individual's current swing but also the future development of the golfer — lead them to improvement. The advancement of equipment and technology has really helped me better my golfers. It has helped me understand how golfers play the game.

**JG:** Tell me about the award you will be receiving this season.

**KO:** I'm going to be receiving the MET PGA Teacher of the Year Award. It's going to make me even busier. I am very proud that I am being recognized by the MET PGA.

**JG:** As the MET PGA Teacher of the Year, what is your teaching philosophy?

**KO:** My teaching philosophy, as a whole, is this: I have a client, I am trying to assess them to the best of my knowledge, and to try and make them play the game better. Whether it's their swing technique or whether it is more equipment oriented, or if it's something else — anything I could do to help them play the game better and to enjoy. If you ask me if I have a system, in a way I do. It's an evaluation of the golfer's movement, their ball flight, their abilities, and their equipment to make sure they are married together to enhance the golfer rather than hinder them.

**JG:** Congratulations on a well deserved award and the best of luck the rest of the season.



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