

Golf Inc.

2017 Most Improved Golf Courses

PUBLIC COURSES

Second Place

Marriott's Griffin Gate Golf Club

Lexington, Ky.

Management Company: Marriott Golf
Director of Golf: Colin Gooch

Western Kentucky native Colin Gooch is having a blast being back home in the Bluegrass State, and Marriott Golf is benefiting from his return. Backed by strong marketing and great customer service, Griffin Gate's Rees Jones-designed resort course recorded year-on-year gains of 19.8 percent in rounds played in June 2017 and revenue gains of 19.6 percent, or \$387,000.

Meanwhile, Gooch's team generated an impressive 44 percent boost in Griffin Gate's outings business and big increases in mem-

bership sales, going from 12 to 50 per year. Despite a \$200,000 renovation project that limited access to the 19th Hole dining facility during the first quarter of the year, overall food and beverage sales still were up by 26 percent at mid-year, compared to 2016.

Another remarkable turnaround under Gooch's direction was merchandising. The golf shop generated a 20 percent gain in revenue while bringing down the cost of goods sold by 16.5 percent. That earned Gooch the title of Kentucky Section PGA Merchandiser of the Year for 2017.

The key to Gooch's first-year success: "Tireless follow-up on marketing leads," he said, plus focusing on his staff's approach to hospitality and, in turn, the resort's overall guest experience. One of the driving forces



Colin Gooch



behind his revamped staff is a group of young, motivated interns from nearby Eastern Kentucky University's Professional Golf Management program.

"They really want to be in the golf industry and make this their career," Gooch said. "Once you have that, then it's just a matter of wanting to care about people and making them feel like a member for a day."