

Jim Baker

Blind Golfer

Inducted 2018

Jim Baker joined the USBGA and finished fourth in his first National Championship in 1992 after losing his sight in December, 1986 from diabetic retinopathy. He was an avid, 9-handicap golfer working as a dentist in Mansfield, Ohio before losing his sight. Jim now lives in Nashville, Tennessee and operated a state run Vending Program.

Jim and his Coach, Kyle Seeley, won the 56th (2001) and 62nd (2007) USBGA National Championships. The 2001 Nationals were held at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, North Carolina and the 2007 Nationals were held at Edgmont Country Club in Edgemont, Pennsylvania. Jim finished second in the USBGA Nationals six times and placed in the top five several other years. Jim and Kyle also finished first in the 2001 US Blind Open Championship. At the Guiding Eyes Classic held at Mount Kisco Country Club in Mount Kisco, NY, Jim finished in second place five times and won the McFarland (net) Trophy award six times.

In USBGA Regional Tournaments, Jim has won at the Leader Dogs Classic in Arizona twice, the Indiana Regional in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Raleigh Regional in Raleigh NC and placed second in regional tournaments six times.

In 1995, Jim was elected to the USBGA Board of Directors and served in that capacity for seven years until being elected president of the USBGA, serving for four years from 2002-2006. He also served as Director of the USBGA Junior Golf Program from 2003-2006 and helped expand the program in which over 500 students (juniors and adults) were introduced to the game of golf in 2006.

Jim's passion for junior blind golf was further illustrated when he helped start the Middle Tennessee Blind Golf Program in 2000. This program meets twice monthly from April through October and includes blind and vision impaired students from the Tennessee School for the Blind and adults from the Nashville area.

In 2009, Jim was again elected to the USBGA Board of Directors and appointed the Junior Golf Director. In 2013 / 2014 Jim was elected USBGA President and held that position until the 2015 Annual General Meeting. He continued to represent the USBGA on the golf course and assisting the management as an active Board member because of his care and concern for the well-being of the USBGA and blind golf in general.

In 2017, Jim's health issues caused him to close his Vending Machine business. Jim's battle with Diabetes caused the loss of his donated kidney, requiring him to endure dialysis 3 times a week. The long term effects of Diabetes ultimately required Jim to have his left foot and leg amputated just below his knee. Despite Jim's struggle with Diabetes, he continues his strong interest in the USBGA.

The United States Blind Golf Association is proud to recognize and induct Jim Baker into its 2018 class of the Hall of Fame.