

iCaddies

Impacting the lives of golf caddies

—interview with Peter-John Pywell

Lockdown negatively impacted many industries around the world. While many of our readers may not be golfers or aware of what is happening in the caddie industry in South Africa, we sat down with a phenomenal young Christian who is investing in the lives of caddies and fulfilling a God-given passion that they Lord laid on his heart during lockdown.

Who is PJ in a nutshell?

I grew up in a large and loud family, which is the cornerstone of who I am today. Family and friends play a massive role in my life. I have an 'out of my league' wife who allows me to pretend I am the captain of the household ship, which consists of our two sons, two dogs, and a small ginger cat named Cat Stevens. I am, most of the time, outgoing and energetic and love a challenge. Growing up with two

older brothers has made me way too competitive in most things I do, but seeing as how they are still my best mates today, I must be a gracious winner. Golf is more than just a sport for me, it has been my career for the past 15 years, and for that I am incredibly thankful, for so many reasons.

What is your testimony?

I was truly fortunate enough to grow up in a Christian household, with both my parents having a strong relationship with the Lord. My parents were consistently, and still are, excellent role models to not only myself and my brothers, but to many who could testify of their love for Jesus Christ. I grew up knowing the love of the Lord. I do have one significant moment where you could say my relationship with the Lord deepened to the next level. I got baptised with a couple of my best mates when I was 14 years old. Later that year we went on a summer camp and during the worship on the second night, well, I got filled with the Holy Spirit for the first time and it was life changing. More recently, getting married and having two amazing boys has been life changing and without a doubt that has strengthened my relationship with the Lord as I have had to be vulnerable and rely on Him many times.

You work in the golf industry, what do you do?

Currently, I head up iCaddies as co-founder and Director with two partners, although we have only been up and running since August 2020. I held various positions throughout my career in the industry, spending the majority of my time at Steenberg Golf Estate. In recent years, I held the position of Golf Manager at De Zalze Estate, and most recently, Director of Golf at Steenberg Estate from 2017-2020. Further involvement in the industry, and a big part of who I am today as a professional, is the PGA (Professional Golfers Association) of South Africa. I am proudly a Class AAA professional, and have been serving on the Western Cape regional committee for the past two years.

You have just founded iCaddies, please tell our readers more?

In my time at Steenberg and De Zalze, for roughly 9 years I was in a position where caddies were a part of my operation and offering at the

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The vision of iCaddies is to equip and upskill caddies in South Africa.



"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"
— Romans 8:31

clubs. Both clubs have a number of caddies who are at a high level. These caddies become unique selling points to the club's members and guests, simply because of the value they add to ones round or experience. An incredibly sad reality is that the caddie industry in South Africa is on a worrying decline, simply because of the inconsistent level of experience you receive from the various caddies. In South Africa, a caddie is deemed to be a relatively low-skilled worker, a simple bag carrier to do some physical labour for a low wage. Yet on the contrary, the role of a caddie is so much more than carrying a bag. Amongst the clubs I was at, we had a handful of superb caddies who were proper ambassadors for the clubs. I grew a massive passion for these gentlemen, and all the good caddies I came across when playing. These caddies and the value they could add have been on my heart and mind for several years. I realised that caddies are one of the most important relationships in golf. For years, this greyed out vision in my mind was formed of developing a caddie program where we have the means to train and uplift the caddies and equip them with the skills to offer a professional service. During lockdown, many industries have struggled and golf was no different. I felt uneasy at work for a couple of reasons, and during the many hours indoors in lockdown I went through some good bonding with our Heavenly Father. One specific course Riané and I were following was John Beveré's, *The Calling*. God spoke to me in a way I had never experienced before. It was like God knocked me back in my bed and I just sat there and laughed. I knew I had to pursue what was on my heart. The next morning while in my quiet time, I felt the Lord say to me, "Today is the day." I mentioned what was on my heart to my wife and went to inform the CEO that I would be leaving the club. The very next day, a gentleman

by the name Danie Korf called me to enquire about advertising and about our caddies at Steenberg. I met Danie that afternoon and he then introduced me to our third partner a week after. Two months later, we launched iCaddies.

What is the vision for iCaddies?

In a nutshell, the vision is to equip and upskill the South African caddie industry, for our caddies to be able to offer a consistently professional caddie service. When we mention upskill, I am referring to every aspect of their lives that would influence their services. Everything from appearance, managing their time and bookings, to finances and the method they are paid (as we take zero fees from them), actual caddie training and knowledge, people skills, etc. Through prayer, I know hearts will be changed and many will come to know our Father. Although the vision is clear, many aspects will be forever evolving, as the arrows increase in our quill.

How do you plan to achieve this vision?

With God-given talent and unmerited favour! And I'm not even joking. We have a great team, which I know the Lord has specifically put together, and through dedication and passion we are going to change so many lives.

How can our readers follow the caddies' testimonies and find out more about your organisation?

We are on Facebook and Instagram, and our app is available on the Android and iPhone app stores, where you can get all the information. Through the app you can book and rate a caddie, as well as sponsor our bibs and donate to our NPC. ■

