

A Best-In-Class Approach to Golf

An Interview with
Hoyt McGarity, Chief Executive Officer, 8AM Golf



True Spec Golf studio in Scottsdale, Arizona

EDITORS' NOTE Hoyt McGarity is the President of 8AM Golf, communicating and implementing 8AM's vision, mission and direction across the entire 8AM Golf portfolio. McGarity has a deep background in golf, as a player, entrepreneur and business leader. He was a stand-out collegiate golfer at Lynn University and played competitively for more than four years on various professional tours. He then turned his energy to entrepreneurship, co-founding Modern Golf, a Canadian club fitting company, in 2011. Three years later he became CEO of True Spec Golf, a brand agnostic club fitting company, and Club Conex, the global leader in adjustable golf club adapter systems. In 2017, McGarity assumed the role of President and CEO of Miura Golf. Soon after, Howard Milstein consolidated his golf investments into a holding company, 8AM Golf, where McGarity became President. He was recently named by Golf Inc. as an "Up and Coming Superstar" in the magazine's Power 2020 issue.



Hoyt McGarity

COMPANY BRIEF 8AM Golf (8amgolf.com) was created by businessman, philanthropist and golf entrepreneur Howard Milstein as the holding company that oversees his golf companies – all of which are dedicated to helping golfers at every level enjoy the game more. 8AM Golf companies include: GOLF Magazine and GOLF.com, the #1 media brands in golf; the Nicklaus Companies (in partnership with Jack Nicklaus); legendary club maker Miura Golf; True Spec Golf, a brand-agnostic club-fitting company that has fit more than 30,000 golfers worldwide; GolfLogix, the most-downloaded GPS app in golf; Club Conex, a global leader in the design and manufacturing of adjustable golf club adapter systems; Fairway Jockey, which provides golfers with the ability to buy custom clubs online; and Chirp, a free-to-play gaming app that lets golfers wager on the outcome of pro golf tournaments, rounds and shots.

You have been around the game of golf your entire life. Will you highlight your background and how it informs your vision for 8AM Golf and its companies?

Golf has been my entire life. I grew up in the Hamptons, but not as part of the clubs out

there – I was always on the outside looking in. I started caddying when I was 12, working my way through every private club in the Hamptons. As I advanced as a golfer, I was able to get a full scholarship to Lynn University, and after my college career, played professional golf from 2006 to 2010 – everywhere from Canada to Europe to South America – all around the world. Even as a player, I was already very interested in equipment, so when my playing career was winding down, I started a company called Modern Golf, and then True Spec

in 2014, working with all of the original equipment manufacturers and developing business relationships throughout the industry. However, things really started to take off when I met Howard Milstein and began working with one of his companies, Miura Golf. Howard then acquired True Spec in 2018, as well as GOLF Magazine and Golf.com. From there, we created the 8AM Golf brand as home to all his golf companies, including Nicklaus Companies and GolfLogix. Over the past half-decade or so, I've been immersed in virtually every aspect of the golf business, and this breadth of experience – and the diversity of the companies that make up the 8AM brand – gives us a unique perspective on all aspects of golf, from media to equipment to golf course design and product licensing.

8AM Golf is a group of golf businesses that cover the full golf experience, from golf course design, to clubs and fitting, to the leading media brand in golf. What ties all of the brands together?

Each of the 8AM Golf companies is best-in-class – we believe that is what defines our brands. They are premium brands that enhance the enjoyment of the game by providing the highest quality golf experience. This is true for Nicklaus Companies, for example, which offers the best golf course design services in the world, building on the legacy of the greatest golfer of all time. This is also true for Miura, the legendary maker of hand-crafted, forged irons by Master Craftsman Katsuhiko Miura, as well as True Spec, our brand agnostic club fitter with proprietary technology and more than 35,000 combinations of club heads and shafts.

Quality is very important to 8AM and its founder, Howard Milstein. How does this passion for excellence inform your approach to the brands and companies you work with?

Howard Milstein's commitment to excellence informs everything we do, so each brand integrates with and brings out the best in the others. We want great companies and, more importantly, we want great people. This is a hallmark of Howard's approach as well. If you look across our businesses, we have great people who are entrepreneurs and have a passion for what they are doing. They think for themselves and work well together – all in the interest of advancing our mission. Best in class is always our goal: we want great companies and we want great people. We look at a lot of companies across the industry who are interested in working with us, but very few make the cut.

Golf is a sport known for giving back to the community. How has 8AM and its owners led the way in these efforts, and how important is philanthropy to the golf industry?

Howard Milstein set the tone for giving back immediately by becoming a Trustee of PGA REACH and donating \$1 million to the PGA's foundations in honor of Jack Nicklaus and all of his charitable efforts over the years. This is an important part of our work, too. We firmly believe in doing well by doing good – that part of our mission flows from the legendary leaders who have made 8AM what it is today: Howard Milstein, whose charitable and civic efforts have made an impact in a wide range of areas, and Jack Nicklaus, whose philanthropic greatness is as impressive as his record as a golfer. That sense of mission inspires all of us. We look for ways to bring the game of golf to underserved communities in all of the areas in which we operate. Look, I didn't grow up at private clubs, right? Golf has given me a career and a life I could have only dreamed of. We look to bring that kind of opportunity and access to others so that they can experience the best of this incredible sport as well.

What are your priorities for 8AM Golf as you look to the future?

I believe golf has a great future, and 8AM is going to be right in the center of it. We're going to continue to grow, not necessarily just in size, but in excellence, creating a series of best-in-class companies that enhance every element of the golf experience. In the coming months, we're going to diversify our portfolio, moving into other areas of the golf world as well – including gaming, food and entertainment – all with great partners and a deep sense of enjoyment for what we do. ●