

Butte des Morts' pros work well as a twosome

By Mike Woods

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APPLETON — We've heard two heads are better than one. So are socks and Dilly Bars.

At Butte des Morts Country Club, they're finding two golf pros are also better than one.

When the club went looking for a new head pro to replace the retired Bill Brodell, it settled on Jason Wachtl. What he brought to the table was something no one else could: a wife, Kari, who is also a PGA professional.

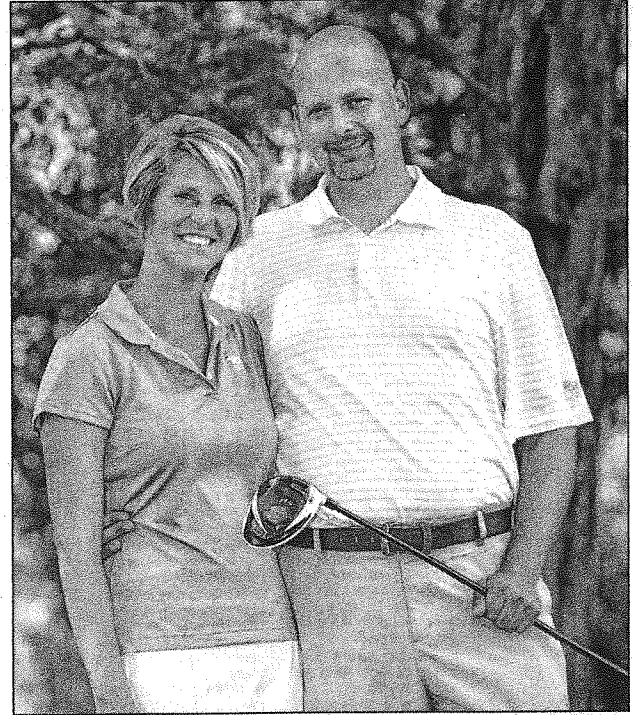
"These jobs are so competitive," said Jason. "Just being able to market ourselves as something different to stand out. When it comes down to the interview process, the eight or 10 people they decide to sit down and interview face-to-face, every one of them can do the job. But to be able to provide something like this that's very unique, it really did help."

"We always joke that I was the secret weapon," said Kari.

The Wachtls have brought a unique quality to Butte des Morts.

"It's a huge asset to have Kari because — not that I can't be sensitive to women's needs or can teach a woman — it's just that it's a very intimidating game, especially for a beginner," said Jason, "and they can expose some weakness in front of her versus in front of me. They feel much more comfortable doing that. That's why you've seen our ladies programs grow so much this year."

Kari's expertise, aside from helping organize and run ladies events, teaching and assisting in junior events, has also helped the members in the pro shop.



Golf pros and married couple Jason and Kari Wachtl work at Butte des Morts Country Club. SHARON CEKADA/THE POST-CRESCENT

"I've had input picking out the merchandise," she said. "Being a golfer myself, I know what I like to wear and what other women like. So our merchandising is really good. Our ladies are our best buyers this year."

Jason, a graduate of Penn State, met Kari, who attended Charleston Southern, while doing an internship at the Kiawah Island Golf Resort in South Carolina, where Kari worked.

"When this opportunity came open, we heard great things about the club and the area," said Kari, who doesn't work full-time so she can help care for the couple's two young children.

The Wachtls' philosophy at Butte des Morts, in a way, starts with the non-paying members.

"We start them when they're 3 years old," Jason said of the junior program. "And it starts with

fun."

The kids hit through hula hoops, chip into swimming pools and often candy is involved.

"If they have fun as a no-holer, they'll have fun as a two-holer and a five-holer and a nine-holer," said Jason. "For those people who are on the border — 'Is this country club membership affordable? Is this the right thing for me?' — if it's just the dad using the club, then it's an easy thing to let go of."

"But when your kids are active and your wife is out here playing golf and doing other social activities, it's much easier to justify that expense. It's a significant expense and people are starting to look at that and making sure they're getting value out of those extra dollars they're spending."

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