



Pablo Creek Club... Where Club is spelled G-O-L-F!

By JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

It has to be motivating and fun for a superintendent to take a position with a club that is first and foremost dedicated to the game of golf. Pablo Creek is just such a club, and Glen Klauk is the superintendent who gets to enjoy helping to make it a reality.

At the end of a winding, crushed-coquina road just minutes away from the metal and glass business centers of Jack-

No. 5
Par 3, 206 yards
Photo by Daniel Zelazek

North Florida Chapter

History: Serving the northeast Florida area or "First Coast" region, the North Florida Chapter began in 1961 as the Georgia-Florida Turf Grass Association. In 1967 the name was changed to the Florida-Georgia Turf Grass Association. In 1977 the chapter assumed its current North Florida GCSA Chapter status. Founding members were Buddy Clark, Baummy Baumgartner, Bob Willis, Crash Hall, Lou Chaff, Ed Dyer, Ed Matson, Amos Deathridge, Tom Svigel and Ron Hill.

Activities: Besides holding traditional monthly meetings, the chapter hosts two annual events: the Mike Richards Memorial Golf Tournament, which funds turf student scholarships; and the North Florida Transition Tournament, which is a weekend-long event that marks the change of officers and is a getaway for members and their families.

Mission: The North Florida Chapter supports the 4-H Club, The Ag Council, and the Jacksonville Area Golf Association. In 1998 the NFGCSA participated in the mayor's city beautification plan by donating 1,000 crepe myrtles to the community.

Current officers: president: Steve LaFrance, World Golf Village; vice president: Clayton Estes, San Jose CC; secretary/treasurer: Ed Neumann, Keystone CC ; external vice president: David Amirault, The Deerwood Club

Total 1997-98 membership: 126

sonville, the Pablo Creek Club is nestled in a timberland wilderness along the banks of a tidal marsh southeast of downtown. The 18-hole, Tom Fazio-designed course winds through hardwood and pine forests and along the bluffs overlooking the marsh.

The only buildings on the site are the clubhouse and the maintenance building, and after two years of existence, the clubhouse just opened. No tennis courts. No swimming pool. No elaborate dinner service is planned here. It's breakfast, lunch and golf. Not necessarily in that order. Breakfast is on weekends only. This place is built to play golf!

Designed as a members' course, the greens and tees are located near each other to facilitate walking and using caddies. Fully 50 percent of the players I witnessed on my recent trip to Pablo Creek were walking. It was a sight reserved these days mainly for small municipal courses. It was like a picture

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From this back tee location on the 8th hole, it's a 226-yard carry to the green. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

Shooting par is a very good score and birdies are hard to come by.

The course isn't tricked up. If you make a double bogey, it's because you didn't hit the ball.

from an old golf book with foursomes walking down the fairways with their caddies. A rare sight indeed, but inspirational and indicative of the "golf only" atmosphere that permeates Pablo Creek.

The club encourages its members to bring family and guests to use the course and about half of the 14,000 rounds last year was guest play. Superintendent Glen Klauk, who sports a six handicap, says, "Shooting par is a very good score and birdies are hard to come by. The course isn't tricked up. If you make a double bogey, it's because you didn't hit the ball." Klauk's own game has been on hold the last two years as he dedicated himself to growing in the new course.

Growing in a new course was one of the reasons Klauk made the move to

Jacksonville after a long, successful career in Palm Beach County.

"I had lived and worked exclusively in Palm Beach County since I was in the first grade," said Klauk. "I had 18 good years at Delray Dunes, my last position, but my mom and dad moved to St. Augustine and my brother Fred is the superintendent at the Tournament Players Club in Ponte Vedra Beach. It was time for me to make a change.

"Fred told me about this new project starting up so I came up to take a look. I came out here to the site in 1996 when just a few acres had been cleared. It was just so different from what I had been doing that I knew I wanted to put in my bid for the job.

"We hit the decks running. The project started in March and the last grass was

The number-one, day-to-day challenge is preparing the course as good as it can be for that particular day.

Glen Klauk, CGCS

Originally from: Hindsdale, Ill. Grew up in Palm Beach County from first grade.

Education: 1975 - B.S. in agriculture with a major in ornamental horticulture from the University of Florida.

Employment history: 1996 to present, superintendent, Pablo Creek, Jacksonville; 1978 - 1996, superintendent, Delray Dunes G & CC, Boynton Beach; 1976 - 1978, assistant superintendent, Coral Ridge CC, Ft. Lauderdale; 1975, spray tech, Frenchman's Creek, North Palm Beach; student internships, Lost Tree GC, North Palm Beach.

Professional affiliations/Honors: Member of GCSAA, FTGA and North Florida GCSA. Service: Currently a director of the North Florida GCSA. 1985-86, past president of the Palm Beach GCSA. Palm Beach GCSA Founders Member Award winner. Palm Beach Distinguished Service Award 1996. Poa Annua Golf Classic Champion 1987. FTGA Golf Champion 1986. Certified Golf Course Superintendent 1985-1995.

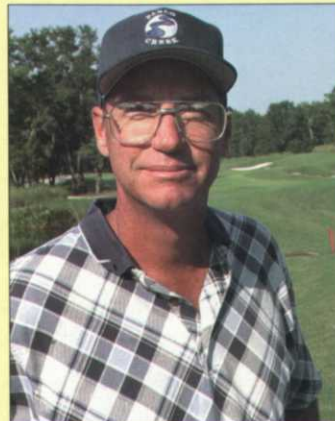
People who have influenced your life and career: Too numerous to mention. I owe a debt of gratitude to my many fellow superintendents, supplier reps, turf instructors and turf researchers. All of them have influenced my approach to turf maintenance and golf in general.

How did you get into the business: Golf has always been a large part of my life, and I followed the example of my older brother, Fred (TPC), into the business. During the 1970s golf course maintenance was making a transition from "farmer learning golf" to "golfer learning farming."

Philosophy/Advice: Every day do the best you can. Then head home and try not to bring work home with you. Every year try to make the course look and play better for the same comparative month. Problems on the course generally are in conflict with Mother Nature. Change the course drainage, shade, etc. to work with nature's forces.

Memorable moments: Hole-in-one at the 17th hole at Delray Dunes while playing with some superintendent buddies. Skiing the mountains of Colorado and Utah. Driving a NASCAR race car at Orlando Speedway. The births of my two children, Lisa(16) and Kevin(11)

Hobbies and interests: My family, golf, snow skiing, tennis, and NASCAR racing.



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planted by July. It was intense, but well done. Fazio and his team do a great job of designing and constructing his courses. Every fairway out here has a minimum of a 2 percent grade. We're fairly sandy so we drain well, but when we get those big thunder boomers the water is moving somewhere.

"We retain the storm water runoff on site. We have a network of seven lakes and ponds that are all connected to a large retention lake that then feeds our irrigation lake. Even holes like No. 17 and No. 18 that overlook Pablo Creek are built to capture the runoff into sumps which pump the excess back into our irrigation lake. If we ever get severely inundated, flood waters stage through the lake system and then any overflow

filters and percolates through bleeder swales."

Building a course in a woodland habitat offers a lot of opportunities for managing turf in harmony with nature and Klauk did his homework early in the project.

"During the development of the greens sites I would ride around in the mornings around 9:00 a.m. and take photos of the shade patterns. Then in the afternoon around 3:00 p.m. I'd do the same thing. If I found morning and afternoon shade impacting the same greens, I'd take my findings to the designer and we'd discuss making adjustments to the site. We are continually evaluating shade problems as the course matures and making necessary

changes to keep the turf healthy."

Klauk listed the predominant trees on the course.

"In the hardwoods we have what I call 'the big six.' There's live oak, laurel oak, water oak, blackjack oak, hickory and magnolia. We also have plenty of slash pines and cherry laurels.

"Because of the woodland habitat, the irrigation design is not wall to wall. Steve Masiak, who works with the Fazio Group, calls it the 'soft look' where the irrigated and manicured fairways blend into the less irrigated roughs and then into the unirrigated natural areas. Native trees often don't adapt well to increased irrigation needed on the turf and so this type of coverage allows for them to coexist.



Morning shadows highlight the 424-yard, 11th hole. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



Dawn breaks on the third hole, all 516 yards of it. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

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Pablo Creek Club

Location: Jacksonville, Florida.

Ownership: Member Owned.

Playing policy: Private Membership and Guests.

18 holes: 7,026 yards. Par 72. Course/Slope Ratings: Championship Tees - 73.9/137; Long Tees - 72.3/133; Founders Tees - 70.4/129; Challenger Tees - 70.9/129.

Designer: Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc.; Tom Marzolf, Blake Bickford, Steve Masiak.

Builder: Landscapes Unlimited.

Opened: 1996

Management: Jay Skelton, club president; Ritchie Bryant, general manager/director of golf; Glen Klauk, golf course superintendent.

Acreage under management: 350 acres. Turf acreage: 120 acres.

Greens: 3 Acres; average size: 6,500 sq. ft.; turf type: Tifdwarf; HOC (inches): .115-.125, spring; .130 - .160, summer; .150 - .190, fall; .135 - .160, winter. Overseeding: Poa trivialis @ 9 lbs./1000 sq. ft. & Penn Eagle 1.5 lbs./1000 sq. ft.; green speed goals: 9.0 - 10.5.

Tees: 4.5 acres; turf type: Tifway 419; HOC: .325, spring; .450, summer; .500, fall; .400, winter. Overseeding: perennial ryegrass @ 15-20 lbs./sq. ft.

Fairways: 30 acres. HOC: .375, spring; .500, summer; .500, fall; .450, winter. Overseeding: perennial ryegrass @ 350 lbs./acre.

Roughs: 60 acres. turf Type: Tifway 419; HOC: 1.5, spring; 2.00, fall. Overseeding: none.

Waterways/Lakes/Ponds: 18 acres. Water quality is enhanced by the use of aquatic plantings. All lakes stocked with largemouth bass and bream. All storm water filters through the entire seven-lake system and is used as an irrigation source.

Irrigation: Source: surface water (irrigation lake) with ground water recharge. Equipment: Syncroflo VFD 1000 gpm pump station. Toro OSMAC controllers (20). Toro 650, 690, 780 and 785 sprinklers.

Staff: Total including Supt., 15. Doug Sani, assistant superintendent; Chad Wells and Matt Seibel, second assistants; David Green, equipment technician; David Moore, assistant equipment technician.

Special or unusual conditions: All upland areas designated gopher tortoise habitats. No pesticides with an LD-50 of lower than 200 are allowed. Northeast Florida climate — damp; long, cool springs favor disease conditions. Raking out deer tracks in the bunkers after they forage for the acorns that fall from the trees.

Projects: Clearing of understory plant material to remove noxious, invasive plants; improve air circulation around greens and enhance views of Pablo Creek.

Maintenance equipment: Greens: Jacobsen 18-inch walkers. Tees: Jacobsen Greens King. Fairways: Jacobsen 3810, 5-gang mowers. Roughs: Toro Articulator Rotary Mower (Does a great job of mulching up leaves when they drop, and we have lots of trees!)

IPM programs: Weed Control: hand pulling or individual spot spraying of noxious weeds along wood lines and roughs. Time removal before they go to seed. Use of pre-emergent herbicides to reduce/eliminate need for follow up post-emergent spray programs. Fertility: use slow release fertilizers and fertigation to spoon-feed the turf according to its needs. Insect control: Use Chipco Choice for mole cricket control to avoid repeated applications of other insecticides.

"One of the things we do constantly is to hand-pull invasive, noxious weeds along the wood lines. We were able to get a good start on this during the grow-in and it has paid dividends by keeping the seeds from spreading and sprouting in the turf. We will also spend a fair amount of time scouting and hand-spraying any crabgrass, goosegrass or *Poa annua* that pops up in the wood lines. We also chemically edge the natural crushed coquina cart paths and waste areas located at the tees with Round-up to control the runners.

"One area that seems to be the toughest for architects and superintendents to agree on is the character and nature of bunker faces. Steep bunker faces create wash-out problems in the sand and irrigation, fertility and mowing problems in the turf. I can't say we won all the discussions, but our opinions were heard.

"I understand that when a certain

look and appeal is built into the design, it is our job to maintain that look. But a few years after the architect is gone and the annual budget is up for approval, we are charged with keeping costs down as much as possible. That's when we start modifying some features to eliminate labor-intensive hand work that doesn't really need to be there."

The discussion of course design and hand work led to the topic of job satisfaction and the challenges facing superintendents in today's market. I asked Klauk what he thought were some key issues facing superintendents and the industry.

"Enjoyment of the job is the number-one issue regardless of where the pressure is coming from, whether it is club politics, inadequate budgets versus expectations or the type of turf and facilities. You have to be able to rise above it and deal with it or face burn-out!

"The number-one day-to-day problem is the challenge of preparing the course as good as it can be for that particular day. That takes everyone's effort to do it right.

"If someone falls short, then that creates a blemish. If everyone makes a blemish — and that's human nature, nobody's perfect — then it can be a problem. If the blemishes or mistakes are scattered out over the whole course, maybe they won't detract from the product you're trying to produce that day.

"There's a whole bunch of things that have to come off right to look good, and if you do everything correctly today that's just one day. You have to come back tomorrow and the next day and do it again and again.

"I try to tell the crew we are serving up a product just like a chef preparing a fine meal. Like the chef, we only have one chance to impress our customer for that meal. If it's not right, then it's

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The 14th green is at home among the hardwoods. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

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The view down No.17 from the long tees. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

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not right. The customer might not come back or at the least he's going to be dissatisfied for awhile.

"It can be a tough assignment to get psyched up day after day to oversee and perform this labor-intensive perfection day after day, but if we can't, who is going to motivate the crew? It is that struggle that sometimes leads to burnout.

"As far as an industry-wide issue, I'd say that labor is one of the toughest areas we are dealing with right now. I am very fortunate to have the crew that we do. They are mostly in their late 20s and most of them have aspirations to progress in this business. They come to work motivated and that makes us pretty "deep" in our roster when we have to cover vacations and emergencies. Doug Sani, my assistant, and David Green, the head mechanic, are very organized individuals and they have a knack for spotting things that need to be done before they become problems.

"Like I said, we are very fortunate. I know many courses in high-cost-of-living areas have a tough time attracting and keeping employees. This is an all-encompassing business that is more sophisticated and technical than people believe. They don't realize all the factors and teamwork that goes into producing these meticulous playing conditions."

Klauk believes in being out on the course with the crew as much as possible. He tries to be the last man through ahead of play to assure that there are none of those little human or mechanical errors that can add up to a poor-looking course.

"I don't mind getting out there with them on projects. I want them to understand that I'm not above any job out here. It gives me an opportunity to show them the how and why we do things in course maintenance. I have an array of tools in my cart and I don't mind fixing up a little problem here



Glen Klauk steadies the tripod while cover photographer Daniel Zelazek uses a truck bed to get the right perspective on a golf hole.

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No. 18 green as seen from behind the fairway bunker on the crest of the hill. Photo by Daniel Zelazek

and there, but if someone is having a bad day and making a lot of mistakes, I'll go get him or her to come back and do it right."

To help get it right the first time Klauk holds daily "talks" as he calls them to keep everybody on the same page about what's going on and what's expected.

"We don't have weekly crew meetings because we're on top of it every day," he said, "If we have a rainy day and the crew is in, then we'll have a formal meeting or training."

"We've been pretty busy with the grow-in and things are settling down as much as they ever do on a golf course. I'm looking forward to meeting and playing more golf with the superintendents in the area. It's always a good way to learn things by playing each other's courses and sharing ideas and problem solutions."

Klauk admits that he doesn't miss many days and it's hard for him to be



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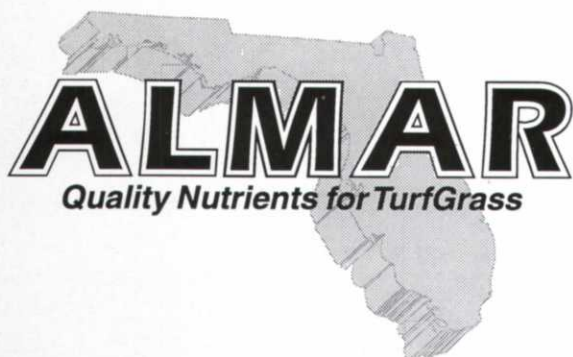
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Taking weekends off from his job as an industrial photographer, Daniel Zelazek has combined his love of the game with his artistic abilities to create memorable covers for the Florida Green. Photo by Joel Jackson

*...if you do everything
correctly today, that's
just one day. You have
to come back
tomorrow and the
next day and do it
again and again.*

away, not because of the staff or the club, but just because he loves the game. He likes to tee it up at the end of the week and play his own course. And that's convenient because Pablo Creek was built for people who like to just play golf.



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A good walk not spoiled. Photo by Joel Jackson



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