View from behind the Par 4, 4th hole. At 447 yards it is the number 2 handicap hole. Photo by Joel Jackson.
Location: Tampa
Ownership: ClubCorp USA, Inc.
Playing policy: Private
Average of rounds per year: 30,000
Number of holes: 18, 7,004 yards, Par: 72, Slope/Rating: 140/74.8
Designed by: Arthur Hills, constructed by Wadsworth Construction, opened 1987
Management Team: Club Manager David Kupstas; Club President Steve Brantley; Green Chairman Tom White; Head Golf Professional David Glandt; Golf Course Superintendent Bill Kistler
Major projects: 2006 Bunker renovation; 2008 Enlarged practice range tee area and added target greens
Acreage under maintenance: 88; total property: 277
Greens: 3 acres. average size: 6,878 sq.ft.; turf type: TifEagle; HOC: .120 - .130 inches; no overseeding; green speed goal: 9.5 – 11.0.
Tees: 5 acres; turf types: Tifway 419; HOC: .5 inches; overseeding: rye blend @ 200 lbs/acre.
Fairways and Roughs: Fairways: 50 acres; roughs: 30 acres; turf types: Tifway 419, HOC: .5 inches on fairways, 1-2 inches on roughs; no overseeding.
Bunkers: 42.
Native Areas: 135 acres of wetlands and woods bordering the golf holes.
Waterways/Lakes/Ponds: 11, 68 acres, maintained by Lake Masters.
Irrigation: Well; Flowtronex pumping system; Toro OSMAC Site Pro control system; Proplus fertigation system.
Water Management/Conservation: Southwest Florida Water Management District – Phase II Modified: Greens & Tees 3x per week. Fairways & Roughs 2x per week.
Staff: 13 full time. 40 hrs per week. No overtime. No part-time employees.
Communications: Daily meetings with crew and pro shop. Weekly department head staff meeting. Weekly one-on-one with general manager. Monthly Golf & Green Committee meetings. Daily interaction with members on the course and in the clubhouse area.
per week, we do have to supplement by hand watering areas that show signs of wilt, which is allowed under the SWFWMD’s modified phase-2 restrictions we are currently under,” Kistler said. It also means that we have to increase our scheduled run times on our elevated greens and tees built of sandier material and tend to dry out quicker than the fairways.”

Kistler and staff also do seasonal mapping of insect infestations for mole crickets, army and sod web worms. By pinpointing specific areas of concern, pesticide applications can be targeted to specific areas, saving labor and material costs and minimizing environmental inputs.

Cultural practices like aerifying and topdressing are not much different from any other course that strives for high-performing putting surfaces with greens speed goals of 9.5 to 11 on the stimpmeter.

I did find one twist that was new to me: During the “Closed Mondays” light topdressing of greens in the growing season, Kistler says they run a roller over the greens after the topdressing is dry. “The vibrations of the roller really help the sand grains to move down into the canopy followed by a light syringing. Then after the irrigation cycle at night, the sand is really invisible the next day and we pick up very little — if any — when we mow.”

Kistler’s greens fertility program calls for a weekly spoon feeding of 0.1 lb. of nitrogen with Plant Food Company’s liquid with 1 to 3 oz. of...
Primo growth regulator. They also apply a slow-release granular fertilizer at a 0.25 lb. rate of nitrogen following core aerifications.

The greens are verticut lightly each week during the growing season and core aerified two or three times a year between April and September. Solid tines are used year-round on the greens to reduce compaction. The tees and fairways are core aerified each spring. As a matter of good stewardship all of the cultural, nutrient and pest management programs are adjusted as needed for weather conditions to maximize the benefits to the turf and to minimize any environmental impacts.

Relaying those changes and implications requires good communication between the superintendent and his staff and the rest of the management team. To that end Kistler says he has daily crew meetings and checks in with the pro shop each day. He added, “It is critical to maintain good relations with all departments at a club and with the customers. I try to interact daily with our members as they play the course. They may see something or have a question that I can respond to for their enjoyment of the course.

“The folks in golf operations and food and beverage often hear comments before anyone else, so it’s good to check in with them frequently also to learn what the members are saying. We do have weekly department head staff meetings and monthly golf and greens committee meetings to stay on top of programs, event calendars and any issues.”

For those advocating that superintendents need to become more educated in the business side of operating a golf club, Kistler has a head start. He came to the superintendent profession by way of a degree in banking and a turf certificate from the University of Georgia.

“After moving to Florida I wasn’t sure of my career path,” he said. “I took a job at the Dunedin CC mowing roughs so I could also play free golf. Before I knew it I was promoted first to spray tech, then foreman and eventually assistant superintendent.

“I had found something I liked to do.”

Kistler credits Dale Reash, longtime superintendent at the Countryside CC in Clearwater with as being his biggest mentor. “Dale was the person who had the greatest influence on my professional development. He prepared me for that next step to become a superintendent.”

After two years under Reash’s guidance, Kistler took over at Tampa Palms in 2002.

Kistler appreciates his growth and development in a career he has come to love and one of his goals is to repay the profession and those in it that have helped him so much. His debt is being paid in full. He has served the West Coast GCSA in all of its offices and is currently serving as the president of the Florida GCSA. Kistler is also a member of the GCSAA Member Relations Committee.

Kistler offers these words of advice to anyone who pursues a career as a superintendent.

“Don’t take everything too seriously. Have fun with what you do. ... And above all, don’t be afraid to ask for help.

“Don’t take everything too seriously. Have fun with what you do. Manage your time wisely to be effective at work and have balance with your personal life. And above all, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Too often superintendents wait too long before asking for help.

“In today’s market I’ve been asking others how they are dealing with budget and staff reductions for one, and still getting the jobs done and meeting expectations. Over the years I have often compared notes with other superintendents and vendors, on what...
Number 14 is a long, tight par-4 guarded by five of the 42 bunkers on the course. Photo by Daniel Zelazek
Tampa Palms –
A Certified Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary

Saw several of these big gators grabbing some rays.

A Photo Essay
By Joel Jackson

Wild turkey flocks, left, are a common sight in the roughs; Great Egret, below left, stalks prey on No. 18; Little Blue Heron, below, walks on water. Turtles, above on facing page, sunning on a chilly day. Later an otter was seen playing in the lily pads.

Other wildlife seen that day but not pictured here include: anhinga, cormorant, limpkin, moorhen, osprey, otter, red shouldered hawk, tri-colored heron, white ibis, wood ibis and yellow crowned night herons.
they are seeing out there in terms of
turf problems and potential solutions."

After learning how Kistler brings
his “A” Game to the golf maintenance
operations every day at Tampa Palms, I
grabbed my camera and spent the next
two hours snapping pictures in this
wildlife sanctuary which doubles as a
golf course.

From Page 15
How ironic. The green choice just happens to be red.

The Toro® Greensmaster® 3150-Q uses up to 50% less fuel than the John Deere® 2500E gas Hybrid.* Looking for the highest return on your greensmower investment? There’s no comparison. Not only is the Greensmaster more fuel efficient, it’s also much quieter. Throw in easy maintenance and unparalleled quality of cut, and it’s easy to see why Greensmaster is the industry leader.

*Both 3150-Q & 2500E units were tested side-by-side at full throttle under typical crosscut mowing conditions.
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TORO. Count on it.
During Tough Economic Times...

Stay With the Basics!

By John H. Foy

According to the news media, there are signs that the national economy is beginning to recover. Yet, for many clubs and courses throughout Florida, rounds and membership levels are still down. Thus the struggle continues for providing the level of course conditioning and quality desired with reduced operating resources.

USGA Green Section agronomists from across the country have compiled conservation strategies in an effort to assist courses in surviving these challenging and difficult economic times. Regardless of the region, turfgrasses being managed, and type of club or course, getting back to and staying with proven and agronomically sound basic programs and practices is a key component of these conservation strategies. Traditionally applied products such as fertilizers, pesticides, water — and even plant growth regulators — have a long history of use; and their value has been proven through many years of research.

Unbiased research is always needed to determine if the benefits of new or non-traditional products justify their cost. In preparation for writing this article, I went online to the Turfgrass Information Center at Michigan State University and did a literature search on the subject of biostimulants. For anyone who is not familiar with the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF), this is a resource database that contains a range of electronic and printed articles from published, peer-reviewed sources on turfgrass research. The biostimulant search resulted in 235 records of articles starting in 1989 up through January, 2010. I would like to summarize a few points noted during my review of the literature.

Defining “biostimulant” is in order. To paraphrase the definition used by Dr. Wayne Kussow, emeritus professor of soil science, University of Wisconsin - Madison used in the introduction of his article, Biostimulants: Yes or No published in the May/June 2009 issue of the Grass Roots magazine, a biostimulant is “anything that promotes the growth, development, or general health of turfgrass.” Dr. Kussow further refined the term to “non-traditional” substances and materials, and again excludes traditional products such as fertilizers, pesticides, water, and plant growth regulators. Previously a University of Georgia scientist reviewed the labels of 15 biostimulant products for turf and found 59 different ingredients. The most common active ingredients of biostimulant products are hormones, carbon sources, humates, and microbes.

As noted earlier, the term biostimulant began to appear in literature back in 1989, and over the past 10 to 15 years, there has been increasing interest in materials that provide enhanced turfgrass growth and health or increased stress tolerance of especially cool-season turfgrasses such as bentgrass. However, there has been some work done here in Florida with bermudagrass. In the 1996 summer issue of the Florida Green, Dr. Monica Elliott and Marcus Prevatt provided a summary of their evaluation of two commercially available, seaweed-derived biostimulants applied to a Tifdwarf bermudagrass putting green. “A consistent lack of response was observed over the two year study” was the summary of their research.

A more recent study was a USGA...