St. Augustine golf courses gear up for GCSAA championship

BY JOEL JOYNER

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will hold its 52nd championship event here as 720 superintendents from around the world compete at six area golf courses. Sponsored by the Toro Co. for the eighth consecutive year, the championship will lead off the GCSAA annual conference and trade show in Orlando, Feb. 3-10.

Following practice rounds, the individual championship and four ball championship will take place Feb. 4-5. The six courses scheduled to host the event arc: The Slammer & The Squire at World Golf Village; The King and The Bear at World Golf Village; Matanzas Woods Golf Club at Palm Coast Resort; Cypress Knoll Golf Club at Palm Coast Resort; and The Golf Club at South Hampton.

The short game will be the key to playing the course. "The course has very generous fairways. The short game will be the issue here as far as scoring well," said LaFrance. "The greens and chipping areas both have a lot of undulation."

"As far as maintenance on the greens, it will depend on the weather," he continued. "If we get any hard freezes, that alone will speed up the greens. You never really know what kind of weather to expect here in early February. It could be freezing or it could be 70 degrees. We'll attempt to have the greens running at 10 feet plus on the Stimpmeter."

There will be plenty of birdie opportunities if the ball is kept in play, according to LaFrance. "The last four holes on the layout are the most challenging, but again the short game will need to be the focus," he said. "We have some strong finishing holes here."

THE KING AND THE BEAR

Designed by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, The King and The Bear stretches 7,279 yards from the back, said Kleinfelder. "It's open, long and a big course. Cypress is around 6,600 yards from the back but it's pretty tight with small greens and narrow fairways. You'll need your driver at Matanzas whereas they'll probably be a lot of two irons off the tees at Cypress Knoll."

Matanzas' superintendent Bruce Stevens said, "The course has very generous fairways. The short game will be the key to playing the course. "The course has very generous fairways. The short game will be the issue here as far as scoring well," said LaFrance. "The greens and chipping areas both have a lot of undulation."

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Matanzas' superintendent Bruce Stevens
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NGCOA show heads to Arizona

PHOENIX, Ariz. The National Golf Course Owners Association will be holding their 20th Annual Conference and Trade Show here at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix in the golf mecca of Phoenix, Ariz., Jan. 19-23. The event is one of the largest gatherings of golf course owners and operators in the world.

Educational opportunities, networking, entertainment and golf will highlight the event. They include: educational sessions that cover everything from wage and hour issues and food and beverage to course management and pace of play; a pre-conference session on management, succession and other issues in family businesses; an UpLink golf outing at Troon Golf-managed Talking Stick Golf Course; and updates on the Internal Revenue Services' ruling to allow depreciation of tees, greens and sand bunkers.