

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Wake ready to show off changes at Palmetto Dunes

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — When the GCSAA Tournament comes to Hilton Head Island in February, they will find the Robert Trent Jones Course at Palmetto Dunes Resort completely transformed.

"We pretty much erased the board and started over again," said superintendent Patrick Wake, who has worked at the resort for almost six years. "We recontoured the whole thing and gave the course more flow and movement. Before it was completely flat.

"We moved 150,000 cubic yards of earth, raised the ocean holes so you can see the water, enlarged the greens, rebunkered the course, dug new lagoons and retention ponds, and installed new drainage," he continued.

Wake worked alongside architect Roger Rulewich and golf course builder Southeastern Golf on the \$3.5 million renovation project. The course now measures just over 7,000 yards from the tips and sports a new set of junior tees that cut the distance to around 2,800 yards. The course reopened on Labor Day weekend after just nine months of work.

"Work started in December 2001 and it was as good a time as any to shut down. After Sept. 11,

a lot of people pulled the plug on projects because of the uncertainty. But since rounds and revenues were down anyway, shutting down and rebuilding didn't hurt us as bad as we had antici-

cuts and decide what we would re-lay and what we would rip out," said Wake. "We redid all the greens irrigation and on holes eight and 11 we redid the whole system except for mainlines."

Wake worked closely with Southeastern Golf to make the inevitable on-site decisions and keep the project on schedule.

"We made a lot of on-site adjustments," he said. "It was a very field-driven job because of the constraints of the existing routing and all the irrigation issues. We met every morning and had a big meeting once a week to review schedules and where we stood on timing. This was not a job that we were going to get an extension on. We had a nine-month schedule and we had to stay with it."

EASE OF MAINTENANCE

According to Wake, the new layout should be much easier to maintain.



The full-scale renovation included new tees...



...and new lagoons and retention ponds.

pated," Wake said.

During the renovation, Wake was responsible for saving the course's existing irrigation system that had originally been installed in 1994.

"We had to save as much of the system as possible. I worked with my assistant Travis Woods and director of golf John Betts to make

"Improving drainage was huge, we had 15 inches of rain the week before we opened and the course was still playable. Before, that would not have been possible," he said. "We also upped the size of the greens because we get 55,000 rounds a year. We also installed Champion bermudagrass. The Cham-

WAKES'S TOOLS

<p>GREENS MOWERS: 4 Toro Triplex 3100</p> <p>TEE MOWERS: 4 Toro Triplex 3100</p> <p>FAIRWAY MOWERS: 3 Toro 6500 D</p> <p>ROUGH MOWERS: 2 Toro reel mowers, 3 Jacobsen 3810</p> <p>RIDING BUNKER RAKE: 3 Toro Sand Pro</p> <p>TURF UTILITY VEHICLES: 3 Carryall 272, 7 Carryalls</p> <p>VERTI-CUT REELS: 1 Jacobsen Greensking IV</p> <p>AERIFIERS: 3 Toro pull-behind, 1 Coremaster, 3 Toro walkers</p> <p>TOPDRESSERS: 1 Turfco, 1 Olathe belt-driven Model 22</p> <p>GROOMING REELS: 1 Exchange on Toro 3100</p> <p>REEL GRINDER: 1 Neary</p> <p>BEDKNIFE GRINDER: 1 Neary</p> <p>IRRIGATION PUMP STATION: Flowtronex, 1,500 gpm</p> <p>IRRIGATION SYSTEM: Toro E Osmac</p>	<p>GOLF CAR FLEET: Club Car electric</p> <p>FLAGSTICKS: Par Aide Tournament Pole</p> <p>COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES: 2 NSN supported with zip drive, HP Deskjet printer</p> <p>PRIMARY HERBICIDE: MSMA</p> <p>PRIMARY INSECTICIDE: Acephate</p> <p>PRIMARY FUNGICIDE: Heritage/Daconil</p> <p>PRIMARY SLOW-RELEASE FERTILIZER: Novex: greens, Regal-UF: fairways</p> <p>PRIMARY WETTING AGENT: Primer</p> <p>CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT: My verticutter</p> <p>OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT: 2 1987 Ford 3910 tractors</p> <p>TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING: 8,000 sq. ft.</p> <p>ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF: 50,000</p> <p>NORMAL GREEN SPEED: 9'</p>
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bermudagrass is so aggressive and the zoysia is slower growing. It has already eliminated a lot of the tedious hand work."

The only thing missing from the renovation, said Wake, was a new maintenance facility.

"We had talked about fitting in a new shop in the budget, but the project went over a bit," he said.

Wake kept 419 bermudagrass in the fairways, but installed El Toro zoysia around all the bunker faces to reduce the amount of bunker edge maintenance.

"I only have an eight- to 10-man crew," said Wake. "The

project went over a bit," he said.

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