

News

TOURNAMENTS

PGA club professional tourney begins in Florida October 24

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A few of the club pros and apprentices who play in the initial series of tournaments set to start in Florida later this month may feel uncomfortable at some point, believing their game has left them and that it cannot be retrieved. The uneasiness may strike in late afternoon following a drive that has sunk into one of those fairway-length "waste bunkers" at John's Island Country Club; or maybe while looking for a ball sliced into the Tifdwarf bermuda rough at Sawgrass Country Club, where Mark Hayes won the Tournament Players Championship by shooting one-over-par. Alas, it is not the sun, but the Professional Golfers' Association's selection of courses for their first winter tour that should give club pros the test of skill many have requested.

The club professional tournament series will begin October 24 at John's Island's north course in Vero Beach, Fla., and finish March 3 at Woodlake Country Club in San Antonio. Between these two events will be 26 other tournaments in Florida, California, Arizona, and Texas for the estimated 13,000 club pros and registered apprentices across the nation.

PGA officials have decided on a format of seven "series" of tournaments, each series consisting of four 36-hole events. Club pros and apprentices must apply to play in each series and only 160 golfers will be allowed to participate on a first-come, first-served basis. The cost for each series is \$1,050, including \$50 for the PGA's administrative costs. The remainder will be divvied up for prizes, but no formula has yet been decided on by PGA officials.

The association hierarchy says it has established the series since

"a lot of members wanted it," according to Ken Anderson, PGA tournament administrator. "It provides them, especially the guys up north, with a place to play other than Disney World," he said, referring to the five tournaments held each winter at the complex. PGA officials hope the series will gain more stature than the isolated tournaments for club pros sponsored every so often by an individual or corporation.

One way to accomplish this goal is returning almost all of the entry fees to the players and another is choosing top-quality golf courses. The John's Island course

is par 71, but has a United States Golf Association rating of 72.4. The course's 83 sand traps and steady wind make it play much longer than its 6,819 yards, says club pro Dave Lidele. The Pete Dye-designed course also features Bahia grass, a wiry Argentinian turf which makes the golf ball difficult to control around the greens.

The series' next 72 holes will be played at the 7,174-yard Sawgrass Country Club in Jacksonville. This 3½-year-old course is par 72 and has water hazards on 15 holes. Hayes scored 289 here at the Tournament Players Championship in March, the highest winning score

PGA CLUB PROFESSIONAL TOURNAMENTS

FIRST SERIES:

Oct. 24-25, 27-28
 Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 2-3

John's Island CC, Vero Beach, Fla.
 Sawgrass CC, Jacksonville, Fla.

SECOND SERIES:

Nov. 17-18, 21-22
 28-29, Dec. 1-2

Boca West CC, Boca Raton, Fla.

THIRD SERIES:

Dec. 5-6
 Dec. 8-9
 Dec. 12-13, 15-16

Mayacoo Lakes CC, West Palm Beach, Fla.
 Indian Springs CC, Boynton Beach, Fla.
 Eastpointe CC, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

FOURTH SERIES:

Jan. 5-6, 9-10
 Jan. 12-13, 16-17

Singing Hills CC, San Diego, Calif.
 Carlton Oaks CC, San Diego, Calif.

FIFTH SERIES:

Jan. 19-20
 Jan. 23-24
 Jan. 27-28, 30-31

Stardust CC, San Diego, Calif.
 San Luis Rey CC, Bonsall, Calif.
 Desert Hills CC, Yuma, Ariz.

SIXTH SERIES:

Feb. 6-7
 Feb. 9-10
 Feb. 13-14, 16-17

Kingwood CC, Houston, Tex.
 River Plantation CC, Conroe, Tex.
 Bear Creek Golf World, Houston, Tex.

SEVENTH SERIES:

Feb. 20-21
 Feb. 23-24, 27-28
 March 2-3

Woodlake CC, San Antonio, Tex.
 Pecan Valley CC, San Antonio, Tex.
 Woodlake CC, San Antonio, Tex.

of any PGA tour championship this year.

The deadline to apply for each series is about two weeks before it will begin, Anderson said. Club pros who have played in 12 or more PGA championships, excluding the four major championships and the Canadian Open, are not eligible.

STATISTICS

Municipal golf survey available from NGF

Women make up 23 percent of golfers at municipal courses in the urban areas of states on the Pacific Coast; there are hardly any club managers at these facilities across the country who belong to the club managers association; and, a majority of municipal courses in the rural areas of 18 states aren't earning a profit.

These are some of the findings from a National Golf Foundation survey of the country's 9- and 18-hole municipal golf courses, "covering all facets," says NGF Executive Director Don A. Rossi.

There are gads of numbers on greens fees, the amount of rounds played and by whom, golf car and financial operating statistics, pro shops and how club pros earn their money. The survey splits the country's municipal courses into nine urban and rural sections, so operators can compare their course with others in the immediate area as well as with those from other parts of the nation.

The survey is available from foundation headquarters for \$1. The address is 200 Castlewood Dr., North Palm Beach, FL 33408.

NEW GOLF COURSES

Course adds nine designed by Palmer

Nine new holes featuring five doglegs and five water hazards have opened at The Landings on Skidaway Island, Ga.



The approach to the seventh green is typical of the tough new Magnolia course.

Twenty-seven holes have been built and 36 more are planned at the residential-resort community.

The latest nine, the "Magnolia," is a par 36 and measures 3,216 yard. It was designed by touring pro Arnold Palmer and GOLF BUSINESS Advisory Board member/golf course architect Ed Seay.

The 3,500-acre development, which is connected by a causeway to the mainland, also includes a tennis club, swimming complex, and clubhouse.

COMPANIES

Toro distributorships sold in two cities

The Toro Co., Minneapolis, has sold two more of its branch distribution centers, leaving the firm three company-owned centers in metropolitan Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York.

The Cleveland area franchise was sold to a former Toro employee, William Schaefer, and Carl Krasny, chairman of a nonrelated Cleveland-based firm. The firm will handle turf and irrigation products and operate from Solon, an eastern suburb. It will be called Schaefer Turf and Irrigation Co.

The Pittsburgh center was sold to Richard B. Spitzer of Stone Mountain, Ga., and George C. Gumm of Carmel, Ind. They will handle only consumer products.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Assistant pros may get financial assistance

Golf shops in Maryland and Virginia have been approved to provide on-the-job training under a GI educational benefits program initiated by Tom Kennedy, assistant to head professional Steve Tobash of Army Navy Country Club, Arlington, Va. Kennedy, the first to qualify for training benefits as an assistant golf shop manager, is chairman of veterans benefits for the Middle Atlantic PGA Section's assistants committee.

Ten assistant pros had qualified for the benefit as of July. They will receive up to \$3,000 in monthly benefit payments over a 2-year period.

It is possible that other assistants in other states could receive similar benefits. The first step, Kennedy points out, is to get the approval agency in the state, usually the department of education, to approve the program. Then application for benefits must be made to the Veterans Administration.

Golf professionals seeking information should contact their state department of education or nearest VA office.

RENOVATIONS

CCC makes changes in club and course

Improvements have continued at Congressional Country Club, Bethesda, Md., even after last year's National PGA Championship. In the clubhouse, a gas-fired imitation lava rock grill has replaced an electric unit in the mixed grill room. Meat cooked on the new apparatus drops juice onto the rocks, which shoot flavorful smoke back to the meat. As a special feature, the grill can be put on a slant so that steaks can be cooked to varying degrees of "doneness" at the same time, simply by putting pieces to be well-done on the lower end of the grill.

Also, casters have been put on the chairs so that diners can turn either way to chat with neighbors — creating a more informal, friendly atmosphere.

As a result, business has increased 20 percent in the 120-seat room, according to manager Kim Saal.

Out on the course, a new, fourth nine designed by George and Tom Fazio has been seeded and should be ready for play next summer — giving CCC two 18-hole courses. The new nine holes on the other side of bordering Persimmon Tree Rd. will be reached through a new tunnel under the road. They will connect with the "middle" nine at the fifth hole and be holes 6 through 14. A halfway house will be built at the 10th tee. The new 18 will measure 6,706 yards from the back and 6,248 from the middle tees — compared with 7,075 and 6,560 for the championship course.

LABOR

Minimum wage boost passed by the House

Minimum wage legislation which will further boost labor costs for clubs was moving through