

## The Moorings Club Golf Course

# “TOUGH AND TIGHT”

By Irene Jones

According to Mike Perham, CGCS, “This short-length course of 4,338 yards is long on hazards and challenge.” Mike has been the Golf Course Superintendent at The Moorings Club Golf Course for three and a half years. It is obvious after speaking with Mike that he has found his special niche at The Moorings, located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian River, four miles down the road from the seaside town of Vero Beach, Florida. But let’s back up a few years and begin at the beginning. The first contact Mike had with the game of golf was through his involvement with a Junior Golf Program sponsored by Palm Beach County. Another major factor which contributed to a continuing interest in the game was the family’s membership at the original PGA Golf Course where he was able to play 3 or 4 times a week.

It is apparent that family involvement and interest in golf pointed Mike in the direction of the golf industry as a career. During the summer of his junior year in high school he took a job on The Boca West Golf Course, where he filled the position of spray man. After that summer he definitely knew one thing: he did not want to continue in this position.

Mike graduated from high school in 1975 at the same time his older brother John Perham was graduating from

the golf course operations school at Lake City Community College. Right after graduation John accepted the position of Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at The Indian Springs Country Club in Pompano Beach, Florida, and Mike went to work for his brother. It was during this time that he realized how personally challenging the role of Golf Course Manager/Superintendent could be.

Mike entered Lake City Community College also, in the fall of 1976. Upon his graduation from the Golf Course Operations at Lake City he came to work for Dan Jones, CGCS at The Turnberry Isles Golf Course in Miami, Florida. I came to know Mike during his two years as Dan’s assistant. *The Florida Green* was experiencing some real growing pains during this time and he would help us out with proof-reading and a number of other magazine related jobs during his off duty hours.

Mike married Marci in November 1978. Now their family includes a daughter, four-year-old Laura and one-year old Christopher.

After Turnberry, Mike made the move up to Golf Course Superintendent at Boca Del Mar Country Club in Boca Raton, where he remained until coming up to The Moorings  
(continued on page 40)



(continued from page 38)

ings Club as their Superintendent three and a half years ago. He began to work on becoming a fully Certified Golf Course Superintendent and qualified for that title after taking the examination in February of 1985 at the GCSAA Convention in Washington, D.C.

Mike is now able to bring all his preparation, training and experience into play at The Moorings Club. "When I came on the scene there was already a "good nucleus crew in operation," in fact one or two of the crew were around when the golf course was being built. The crew all stayed when Mike came on board. Even now, the crew turn over rate is less than 10% per year. "By moving the pay scale up in accordance with the value of the employee and by giving excellent benefits the club has rewarded people for their longevity and service."

The golf course maintenance operation and the pro shop operation enjoy an excellent working relationship. According to Mike, "Our golf professional, Rick Graves, is sympathetic to the course maintenance conditions and programs. He is a good buffer between members and the maintenance department. He helps the members understand why certain maintenance procedures are being done out on the course." Rick Graves, Head Professional, just set the 5 under par course record at The Moorings this spring. He also holds a degree in agronomy from The University of Florida.

The Moorings is a private membership club, controlled by Moorings Development Company. "They are a very good group of people to work for, the company is very supportive of the programs and projects on the golf course." An example of this was the support given last September when the members arrived back at the club to find the course not up to its usual "par condition" because of having to shut off and move the irrigation

system during the entire month of August. Management explained the situation to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Oaks, sable plams and mangroves, wind, water, and estuary type native Florida grasses describe this 18 hole 4,338 yard par 63 course. The greens are not oversized, instead of being large, they roll, curve and fall and they offer just the right ingredients for a tough test of golf. Interesting and difficult have often been used to describe this short-length course. Pete Dye is the architect. If the golfer hits the ball where Dye is inviting him, then he will have an excellent approach to the green; but if he lands it anywhere else he will find himself in trouble. "When you create hazards which allow challenge," Dye believes, "you ought to reward the player by putting him in the best position for his next shot. This is the only really valid principle in golf course design."

As "most challenging" Mike names: the one and a half acres of green surface (Tifgreen 328) which are mowed by hand all year long. The hand mowed tees, and the fact that he is starting to Triplex mow all fairways now. Careful attention is also given to the 62 small, tight, well bunkered sand traps, and the one a a half acres of "Pete Dye waste area traps."

In fact, it was at The Moorings Club that Pete Dye first tried his unique features of waste areas and grass bunkers. The Moorings offers target type golf. The tees and fairways are planted in hybrid Bermudagrass, while the rough is planted with Bahiagrass.

Mike described the front nine holes as "going right out into the Indian River." That is the nine holes that I want to play! ■

