

# Chrysler-Plymouth Tournament of Champions

North-South Course at Grand Cypress GC, Orlando  
Head Superintendent: **Tom Alex**; North-South Superinten-  
dent: **Shane Mathews**; Assistant Superintendent: **Andy Smith**;  
New Course Superintendent: **Dan Burdette**.

Saturday, January 14th. It is exactly one week since a devastating storm front wreaked havoc on metropolitan Orlando with squalls and tornadoes. Another severe front indicated by a brilliant red slash on the weather radar is advancing slowly across the state toward Orlando. It is the morning of the third round of the LPGA Tournament of Champions. Central Florida is once again under a Tornado Watch

Tom Alex and staff wait anxiously for a sunrise that won't happen. Finally, when enough twilight is showing they begin their morning course preparation routine with one eye on the radar and an ear tuned for thunder. Tom is the first to admit that they are blessed with a small field of players (40) which translates into 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. tee times off the first tee only. This gives the crew ample time to double and triple cut the greens as needed for required speed; mow tees, collars, approaches, fairways, fair-rough cut and hand rake bunkers ahead of the first group.

During the day if any inclement weather threatens, a crew member stands by each green with a squeegee to remove any possible sanding water. Later in the afternoon as the players begin to clear the first few holes the crew duplicates the morning routine and in addition mows the primary roughs to boot.

Actual preparation for the event and in turn the fall/winter season begins in October with the overseeding of the golf course. The unusually warm fall required additional seed applications above the normal 100,000 pounds to achieve desired density in fairways and roughs. The normal 10-lbs.-per-thousand bent/poa mix on the greens ended up closer to 14-lbs.-per-thousand. Tom prefers multiple mowings (2-3x) in the morning and evening to achieve green speed rather than mechanical rolling for this event. He explained, "The LPGA requested a course that

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had firm, fast fairways and greens that would hold shots. I felt that if we rolled these greens too much they'd be too firm to accept their approach shots."

Tom is able to put close to 50 people on the tournament course for the daily preparations by borrowing staff from the other courses on property. In fact, Dan Burdette comes down from the New Course one month prior to the event and oversees the North nine and resident superintendent, Shane Mathews concentrates on the South nine which has the finishing holes. Their goal is to have "No Ground Under Repair" or as Tom put it, "no white paint" by the LPGA advance team. They succeeded in reaching that goal for the second straight year

The radio crackles, "Tom there is a severe storm cell moving in with lightning activity!" Pow! A bolt hits nearby. Tom calls Shane and Dan to get the crew off the course until the cell passes. Tom and I are in an open cart making a mad dash for shelter ourselves. As the rain drenches us and runs down our faces, Tom turns to me grinning and says, "Hey Joel, just another day at the office, right?"

Well, the tournament got lucky and the front passed without postponing the round. Months of planning and hard work could have been wiped out in an instant, but fortunately not this time! Everything else went as planned and Dawn Coe Jones shot a 7-under score to win the event. Sometimes you wonder how many people realize just exactly how much work and effort was on the line during those tense hours as the storm poised to strike. For Tom and staff and all of us, it is just another day at the office.

*Joel D. Jackson, CGCS  
Disney's Magnolia GC*

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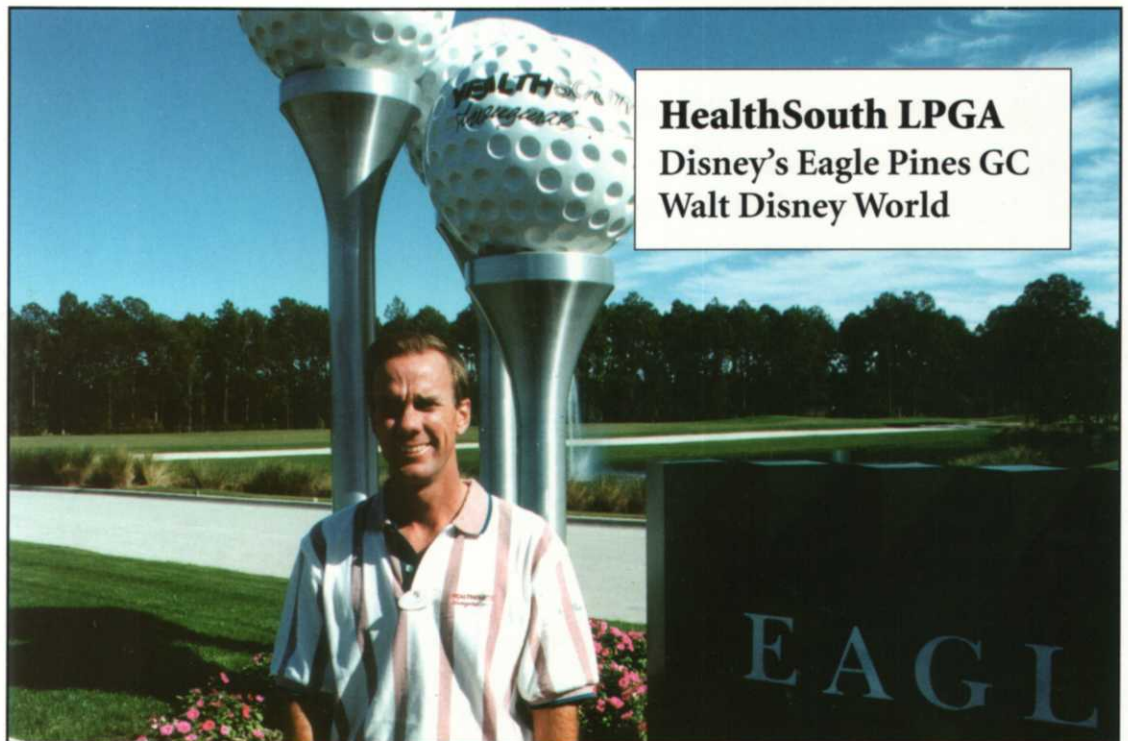
**LPGA Tournament of Champions  
North-South Course at  
Grand Cypress GC, Orlando**

*Head Superintendent Tom Alex (top left) checks with weather radar. North-South Superintendent Shane Mathews (above in print shirt) goes over last minute details with crew. Assistant Superintendent Andy Smith, far left, and New Course Superintendent Dan Burdette await word to get started.*

*See story, Page 66*



*Disney's Bonnet Creek Head Superintendent Scott Welder (above) Eagle Pines Superintendent Pat Hennessey (right) faced a tournament week with a very busy schedule. See story, Page 70.*



**HealthSouth LPGA  
Disney's Eagle Pines GC  
Walt Disney World**

## HealthSouth inaugural

### Disney's Eagle Pines G.C., Walt Disney World

**Manager of Golf Facilities:** *Larry Kamphaus*, CGCS; Bonnet Creek Head Superintendent: *Scott Welder*; Eagle Pines Superintendent: *Pat Hennessey*.

A funny thing happened on the LPGA Tour this year. After the Tournament of Champions was over, the players just had to go across the street for the next tour stop. Eagle Pines is literally less than a mile from Grand Cypress.

Besides being the first full-field event of the year for the LPGA, it was the 2nd professional event in less than four months for Eagle Pines. The Walt Disney World-Oldsmobile Classic PGA event was played there in mid-October. In fact it wasn't until sometime in November that the decision to have the LPGA event at Disney was finalized.

Time, tide and tournament sales wait for no man. Pat and his crew had to prepare for this new event in the midst of a busy, already-booked, schedule of group tournaments and resort guests. The worst unavoidable conflict came Monday of tournament week when the course hosted a 144 man shotgun tournament in the morning and a 90-man shotgun in the afternoon the day after a heavy rain event on Sunday.

It was a tough assignment to get ready for the LPGA at the same time. Because of the normal maintenance programs, there wasn't a lot of extra work to be done other than sprucing up the native areas with fresh pine straw. Pat was able to assign one temporary foreman to oversee a crew of part-time workers to get that accomplished.

During the tournament itself, Pat ran his schedule basically like he does for the Classic. The regular crew is split into morning and evening shifts. The morning shift of 14 people comes in at 2 a.m. and rakes the bunkers until daylight. Then they mow greens, tees, collars and approaches. They also drag the fairways to remove the dew.

The evening shift of four people mows and blows fairways, and top dresses divots on tees and fairways. Because of the stress from heavy traffic already on the greens this season, Pat opted for a combination of double cutting and rolling to achieve the desired 9.5 speed on the greens.

The HealthSouth Inaugural was also the debut of The Golf Channel's tournament broadcast coverage. The new cable entity got to cut it's teeth on this event, and Scott and Pat got to help

them through this first broadcast.

The most amazing challenge and accomplishment of this event was that it went from non-existence to successful completion in eight to ten weeks. Pat gives the lion's share of credit to Head Golf Professional, Kevin Weickel for coordinating everything between Disney, LPGA, Del Wilber Management, and The Golf Channel.

Pat predicted that it would be a veteran shotmaker who would win the tournament. He was right. It was patient Pat Bradley who battled Pete Dye's challenging layout to a 5-under score and a victory. By dawn the next day the course was ready for normal resort guest play with all traces of the tournament magically gone overnight.

*Joel D. Jackson*, CGCS  
Disney's Magnolia GC

## Royal Caribbean Classic

### Links of Key Biscayne, Florida

**Superintendent:** *Mark Richards*

The sixth annual Royal Caribbean Classic was hosted this year by superintendent Mark Richards at the Links of Key Biscayne. Mark has been working for Metro Dade County for ten years, with the last seven spent at Greynolds Park in North Miami. He began working at Key Biscayne on December 19, 1994 with only a month to prepare for the tournament.

The first decision Mark made was to overseed the greens because, like many other golf courses in South Florida, the greens were still recovering from all the rain we had in 1994. Mark overseeded the greens with *Poa Trivialis* at a rate of 10-lbs.-per-thousand-sq.-ft. on Dec. 30-31. The greens were touched up with another 5-lbs.-thousand-sq.-ft. on Jan. 13. The tees were scalped down to take out as much thatch as possible. They topdressed tees heavily and brought the height back up to one-half inch.

Richards began rolling the putting surface during the Pro-Am on Wednesday and Thursday and once after the first round of the tournament. He brought the height down to .145 (accugauge), double cut in the morning and once after play was finished. The results were greens that were rolling 10 to 10.5 on the stimpmeter. Although Mark seemed to be worried about the



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**Royal Caribbean Classic**

**Links of Key Biscayne**

*Superintendent Mark Richards checks green while preparing for tournament.*



**The Intellinet Challenge**  
**The Vineyards, Naples**

*Superintendent Pete Metcalf, photo left.*

**GTE Suncoast Classic**  
**TPC of Cheval Tampa Bay, Tampa**

*Superintendent Chuck Green (above left) and Assistant GCS Scott MacEwen check green with a stimpmeter.*

greens a week before the tournament, most of the praise was about how great they putted. J.C. Snead, who won in a playoff against Raymond Floyd, gave special thanks to the golf course superintendent. The announcers on ESPN also gave rave reviews of the course condition all weekend.

One of the superintendent's worries during the tournament came in keeping a watchful eye on all the service companies that came out to set up tents for all the social events. On Wednesday night after the first day of the Pro-Am, one of the companies was setting up patio tables and hammered an umbrella stand down through a 3" irrigation line and an 8" main line.

Mark and his crew began digging out around the pipes at 7 p.m. and, due to the proximity of the 8-inch main, it was dug mostly by hand. They had to cap the 8-inch to finish the watering

cycle that evening, and everyone called it a night around 2 a.m. They left the 8-inch capped until after the tournament was finished.

Mark said he relied on his previous experience, as well as the support of others. He would like to thank Steve Kuhn, Monica Elliott, Bill McKee and Chuck Gast for all their help. He also said he would like to pass on thanks to some vendors for their contributions, including Florida Superior Sand, Kilpatrick Turf, Liquid Ag, Du Cor Chemical, Atlantic Fertilizer, and Hector Turf.

Once again, congratulations go out to Mark Richards for a job well done

*Kelly Cragen, GCS  
Biltmore GC, Coral Gables*



# The Intellinet Challenge

## The Vineyards, Naples Florida

Superintendent: *Pete Metcalf*

Every superintendent will face the challenge of preparing for a tournament. For most of us, it is the Member-Guest or Club Championship. Pete Metcalf, however, prepares his golf course for some of the greatest golfers of all time. When February rolls around in Naples and the likes of Raymond Floyd, Lee Trevino and Arnold Palmer come to town, you can bet that the Vineyards will be ready.

I talked with Pete shortly after the tournament and he informed me of the extremely rigid standards set forth by the Senior PGA Tour. As a veteran of five Senior PGA events, Pete has learned what he can and cannot do before the tournament. Even summer programs are timed to reduce any possibility of inferior playing conditions in February.

About eight weeks prior to the tournament, Pete begins to bring his golf course to a new level. Actually, he brings his course up to a new standard of excellence and a lower level of cut. Mowing heights begin to move downward for greens, tees, fairways and upward for roughs.

Greens are lightly top-dressed and lowered gradually to 1/8-inch, which gives them 9.5-10.0 roll on the stimpmeter. This year the greens were overseeded with Cobra bentgrass and Sabre, Poa trivialis blend and as usual they were perfect. Tees

and fairways were mowed at 3/8-inch and were firm and fast for the pros. I was very surprised to hear that members played right up to tournament time. In fact, I think Pete even had some "walk-ons" during the tournament.

Because the Vineyards is a 36-hole club, Pete had adequate staff to prepare for the tournament, but he did admit that he paid just a little more attention to the south course.

Pete has an outstanding staff at the Vineyards. His assistants, Jim Vajen, Ron Boettger and Kyle Nygard, constantly remind crew members their goal was perfection. When a man the size of Pete Metcalf exclaims that there will be no tolerance of mental mistakes, you can bet the farm that there won't be. When the tournament is over, I am sure each and every crew member will be proud to be part of another great tournament at the Vineyards.

This year was no exception. The course was in great condition. Unfortunately, bad weather shortened the event to thirty-six holes. But from the winner, Bob Murphy, to the very last place man in the field not a negative comment was heard. Although tournament conditions cannot be maintained year round, maybe some of us can hold our own little championships and try to be like my hero, Pete Metcalf.

*Wayne Kappauf, CGCS*  
Island CC, Marco Island

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# GTE Suncoast Classic

## TPC of Cheval Tampa Bay, Tampa, Florida

**Superintendent: Chuck Green**

Chuck Green arrived at TPC Cheval just in time to get the course ready for the Senior PGA Tour qualifying school, the qualifying finals and the GTE Suncoast Classic all back-to-back. He credits his Assistant, Scott McEwen for working a "trillion hours" to make it all successful. Little did Chuck know that Central Florida's "one week of winter" was just about to happen.

The Senior Tour officials requested a green speed of 9.5 on Cheval's severely undulating putting surfaces. To achieve this, Chuck began mowing ten days before the event, twice daily, with walking mowers with verti-groomers set 1/32 below the bedknife. During the tournament the greens were double cut in the morning and evening to keep the speed consistent.

Five days before the tournament, that "week of winter" I mentioned earlier, arrived. The course suffered two frosty mornings and a six hour freeze. The turf went off-color. Fortunately, the temperatures bounced back rapidly and the turf responded to be in great shape for the competition. No rabbits out of the hat, no cards up the sleeve, no smoke, no mirrors. Just patience in dealing with Mother Nature and having faith in your programs.

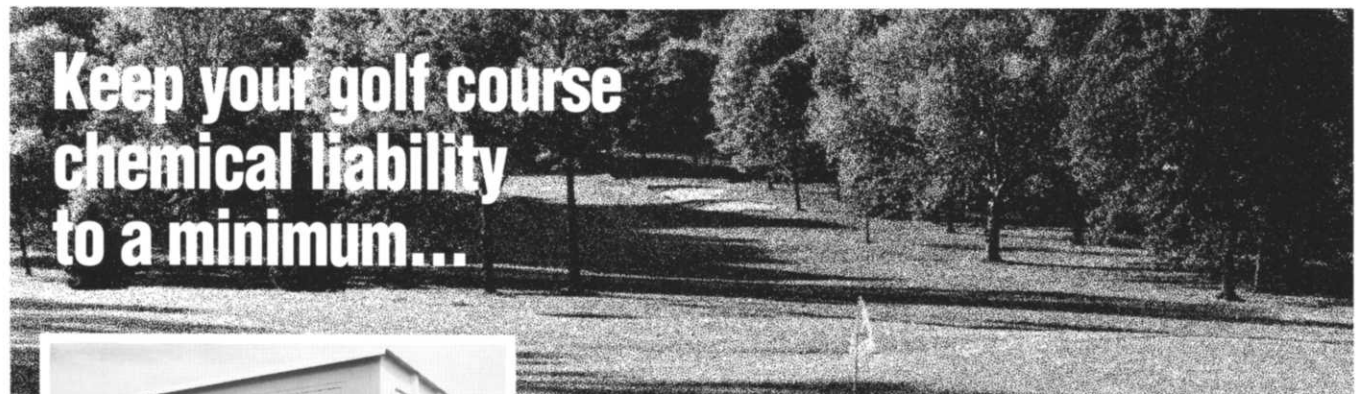
Yes, faith and a full staff of 20 people who worked two shifts

daily. Starting each day at 3:30 a.m. and working till 9-10 a.m. Then back again at 3 p.m. till midnight. Everybody worked a 7 day week and put in 80-100 hours. Chuck also said that the loaner equipment he had available was a must for the success of the operation. The only problem encountered was with the night work. One operator misjudged the distance of an oncoming vehicle in the glare of the headlight and turned into some curbing and damaged a reel. That's one of the pitfalls facing any operation that has to rely on lights to get work done for special events or dawn tee times.

The weather turned out great for the event. The galleries were estimated at nearly 200,000 for the week ranking the tournament in the top three in attendance.

In fact, crowd control was a concern to Chuck as curious onlookers strayed into areas that were being mowed in the afternoons. But the crowds also saw Dave Stockton Sr. fire a nine under score to win the event. No time to rest for Chuck. He's on his way south to grow in a new TPC course. Former Central Florida superintendent, Steve Sorrell, returns from South Carolina to take over TPC Cheval.

*Joel D. Jackson, CGCS  
Disney's Magnolia GC*



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