



Number 2
Par 4, 407 yards
Westview C.C.
Photo by Daniel Zelazek



WESTVIEW COUNTRY CLUB

Everything Old is New Again

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

This Summer issue gave me the chance once again to travel in time back to the days of the Florida Land Boom of the Roaring 20s and to the beginning of the golden age of golf. It was in 1924 that Bobby Jones won his first U.S. Amateur title, Walter Hagen won the PGA

Championship, Cyril Walker won the U.S. Open, Dorothy Campbell Hurd won the U.S. Women's Open and steel-shafted golf clubs became legal in the United States.

It was also the year that the Westview Country Club was established.

The clubhouse, a Miami landmark, once was used as a

housing facility for U.S. Navy wives during World War II, and it is said that during Prohibition notorious gangster Al Capone once used part of the club as a casino and speakeasy. Later in 1954, Westview also hosted an international dinner celebrating the sixth anniversary of Israel's becoming a nation. The dinner was held in honor of James

Course Facts



Westview Country Club Grounds Maintenance Staff.

The Westview Country Club

Location: North Miami

Ownership: Private, member owned

Playing policy: Private

Holes, yardage, ratings: 18, 6800 yards, par 72, 73.5/136

Club established in 1924. Designed by Mark Manhannah in 1956 and re-designed by Kip Schulties in 2000.

Management: Jeffery Herzfeld, president; Steve Kaplin, green chairman; Louis Garcell, club manager; Rob McDonald, head golf professional; Jason Bagwell, golf course superintendent

Major Renovations/Ongoing Projects: Bunker renovations after Hurricane Wilma; laser leveling tees, replacing trees lost in hurricanes; renovating driving range (adding irrigation and target greens)

Total acres: 120, 100 under maintenance

Greens: TifEagle. 5800 SF avg., 3.25 acres. HOC 0.090-0.110 winter; 0.110-0.120 summer; Stimp goal 9.5-plus. No overseeding.

Tees: Tifway 419 with three tees in TifSport. 3.0 acres. HOC 0.450-0.500 year round. No overseeding.

Fairways: Tifway 419 with off-types. 25 acres. HOC 0.450-.500 No overseeding.

Roughs: Tifway 419 with off-types, including areas of St. Augustinegrass. 45 acres. HOC 1.5-2.0 No overseeding.

Bunkers: 59. Machine raked with Toro Sand Pro with brushes and hand-rake perimeters

Native/Waste areas: 5 acres of mulched waste areas planted with fakahatchee, muhly and cord grasses. We have stockpiled our own mulch from chipping up the hurricane-damaged trees.

Waterways: 30 acres. Most of the lakes and ponds are tidal. Maintained by Lake Masters twice a month.

Irrigation: Surface water from the lakes. Flowtronex VFD pump. Toro Osmac control system with Site Pro software. Approximately 550 Toro 750 and 785 heads.

Water Management/Conservation: Minimal daytime watering except hand watering of greens as needed.

Staff: Total including superintendent is 20 year round, counting one part time. Weekly budget per person 40 hours straight time; overtime only as needed for renovations or emergencies

Key Personnel: Hector Garcia, assistant superintendent; Ernie Hamilton, equipment technician; Justin Hawkins, pest control technician (Hawkins is leaving to become assistant superintendent at Emerald Hills)

Communications: Crew meeting as needed; department head meetings biweekly in season; Green Committee meetings monthly.

Cultural Programs: Aerifying – Greens 4x/year; tees and fairways 2x/year with supplemental slicing of fairways during winter. Verticutting – Greens monthly and tees annually. Topdress greens biweekly.

Pest Control/IPM: Spot-treat mole-crickets outbreaks with Top Choice. Spot-treat nematode weak areas with Namacur – usually no more than six bags a year. Apply pre-emergent weed control 3x/year.

Turf management challenges: Different soil types in pockets throughout the course create challenges for uniform moisture and nutrient management.

Noteworthy: The club celebrated its 80th anniversary in 2004. Gene Sarazen was the first head pro and in the 1980s Bruce Fliescher was the director of golf before becoming a star on the PGA Senior Tour.

MacDonald, the first U. S. Ambassador to Israel.

For more than 80 years, Westview Country Club has been associated with thousands of charity golf tournaments, golf outings and other fund-raising events. In addition there have been the countless weddings, receptions, engagement parties, fashion shows, birthday parties, theme parties, Grand Balls, dinner dances and numerous holiday and seasonal parties.

A lot of lives have passed through the doors of Westview over time, and the overlying connection has always been golf. Westview's first head golf professional was Gene Sarazen, who hosted Miami's inaugural Pro-Am Golf Tournament in 1927. Another head professional in the 1980s was Bruce Fleischer, who went on to become the leading money winner on the PGA Senior Tour.

With its notable achievements and golden moments captured in the history books, Westview stepped confidently into the 21st century by embracing Kip Schulties' new 6,800-yard championship design in 2000, molded from the remnants of the original design by Mark Mahannah built 50 years ago.

Westview is located on NW 119th Street, less than five miles west from Upper Biscayne Bay and 13 miles east of the Dade-Broward Levee that marks the eastern border of the Everglades. Many of the lakes and ponds on the golf course have tidal flow as a meandering waterway connects the Biscayne Canal to the north to the Little River Canal to



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Number 1 is a 336-yard, par 4. Some of the trees in the background show the effects of Hurricane Wilma on the landscape. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

the south. Both of these canals have outfalls on Biscayne Bay.

Because of those connections, Superintendent Jason Bagwell, a 32-year old graduate of the University of Florida turf science program, pays special attention to his course management programs, ever mindful of his environmental stewardship responsibilities. Bagwell says, "We only spot-treat for mole crickets and nematode outbreaks. We don't make any full course applications of those pesticides. I personally apply all our bulk fertilizer applications so I know where the product is going down."

Another reminder of the waterway connections to the bay was a group of manatees frolicking in the large lake that borders the first, second and ninth holes. Bagwell said, "Every year we get a group of manatees in the lake. Evidently they come up here to mate. They aren't very skittish either. When they are nibbling on the tor-

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Superintendent Facts

Jason Bagwell

Originally From:

Hendersonville, NC

Family: Wife Kathleen and daughter Sarah (6 months)

Education: BS in turf science from the University of Florida. I was the first graduate in turf science from the program at the Ft. Lauderdale Research & Education Center.

Employment History: 1998-2002: assistant superintendent at The Club at Emerald Hills. 2002-present: superintendent Westview Country Club

Professional Affiliations: Member of the GCSAA. Held all offices on the South Florida GCSA board. Will become president for 2006-07 later this year.



Jason Bagwell

How did you get into the business?

During high school in North Carolina began working at a nursery and many landscape side jobs. I spent a lot of time farming 50-70 acres of corn and bean

fields with my best friend's family. We both went to turf school at NC State, but when my family moved to Florida I transferred to UF.

Mentors: I attribute my success to my grandfather for teaching me hard work ethics and to Bob Harper at The Club at Emerald Hills for my golf course management style.

Goals: To become a certified golf course superintendent and to continue giving back to the industry through our associations both locally and nationally.

Work philosophy: Lead by example, always be on time, and be professional at all levels of business.

Hobbies: Playing golf, fishing, and snowboarding trips during the winter.

pedogress along the edge of the lake I can almost walk up and pet them.”

Westview's irrigation comes from the surface water in these lakes and ponds, so Bagwell uses Tom Burrows Turfgrass Services for soil and water sampling to make sure salinity, pH and nutrient levels are managed properly for healthy turf growth.

The manatee sighting followed on the heels of my first encounter with live iguanas on the second tee and bridge where I counted a total of five of the marine lizards. Ranging in color from shades of grey and tan and bright green, these reptiles chose to scamper away at our passing. I did manage to snap a shot of two of them on the forward tee.

Since Westview was built 82 years ago, it isn't hard to imagine that the rest of North Miami built up all around it. So when I located the course by logging on to Google Earth, the aerial view clearly shows the golf course as one of the few large parcels of green space left in densely populated residential and industrial surroundings. Little wonder Bagwell reports a significant wildlife inventory for such an urban location,

“Including the manatees and iguanas that you saw, we have alligators (not a problem thus far), raccoons, possum, fox, squirrels and a full range of bird species.” I saw a variety of wading birds and perching birds as we rode the course. Bagwell said they also have a lot of rose-cheeked parakeets which have become fairly common on many golf courses from Miami to Naples up to the St. Petersburg area.

The ride through on the course also revealed remnants of damage from Hurricane Wilma. Tall stumps of Australian pine trees still lean to the northeast, giving away the direction of the winds and the location of the eye as the storm passed through south Florida last year. Bagwell has kept one or two half-uprooted specimens intact for show and tell for the insurance adjusters who come by and may be new to the area. Without a tangible example of the damage, they question some of the ongoing claims for repairs and restoration costs. One easy call for Bagwell was to replace the damaged ficus trees with groves of palm trees. He said, “We tried to save the ficus knocked down by Katrina. After Wilma came through

and took out the new and saved trees, we decided to replant with a variety that has a better track record, like the native palms.”

Hurricane damage recovery experience wasn't in Bagwell's resume when he came to Westview four years ago in 2002 after spending four years at The Club at Emerald Hills in Hollywood as an assistant superintendent with Bob Harper. It wasn't until the 2004 season that hurricanes began pummeling south Florida with multiple storms. However, Bagwell does credit Harper with helping to develop his course management skills.

Harper is a formidable low-handicap golfer who has captured several individual trophies for his play in statewide superintendent tournaments. Some of that skill must also have rubbed off on Bagwell (a 6 handicap) too, since he joined his old boss on the winning South Florida GCSA teams for the FGCSA Championship last September and the Poa Classic Championship this past May in Naples. Bagwell's golf credentials help drive him to strive for perfection on the greens at Westview. Says Bagwell, “I have a stimp meter



Number 11 is a 171-yard par 3. The tidal creek, left, in front of the white tees connects the lakes and ponds. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



Number 3 is a 543-yard, par-5 dogleg around a large lake where manatees congregate each year. Photo by Daniel Zelazek

in the office, and I will post a number when they want one for special events. But I can chip or putt the greens while making my rounds and tell that they are rolling well.”

While the stimpmeter may be standing in a corner of the office in the maintenance building, Bagwell says his real office is his utility vehicle. “I’m a hands-on superintendent, so when I say I spend most of my time in my office, people look at me kind of funny. What I mean of course is that I’m mostly on the course during the day. When I visit other superintendents I’m always eyeballing what tools they carry in their vehicles.”

For the record, I took inventory of Bagwell’s “office” and it contained: a raincoat stashed behind the seats, a small tool box for hand tools (pliers, screwdrivers, etc), two milk crates containing a hand sprayer, traffic-control signs, two bottles of top dressing for divots, irrigation flags for marking

heads, leaks, etc, cans of spray paint and a 1.5-gallon hand sprayer for spot treating weeds. Also in the back of the cart was a hose with a quick coupler, a soil probe, a small diameter yardage wheel, spare traffic control stakes and two golf clubs – wedges I think. In the dashboard was a collection of found golf balls all used for checking green speed and shot-holding ability of the greens I assure you.

I was amazed to learn that Bagwell’s use of Namacur on greens only as spot treatments consumes six bags a year and, while I didn’t get a total count of his Top Choice consumption, it was by the bag and only mole-cricket hot spots are treated. With such a focus in the media on activists’ fears of runoff and leaching of pesticides and fertilizers, it’s nice to know Bagwell is trying to do the right thing as part of his normal practices.

(Photo feature page 30. Text continues page 34)



Jason Bagwell's office-on-wheels. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Clumps of red and white firecracker bushes mixed with Mexican petunias shown here alternate with dwarf bougainvillea beds to provide beautiful splashes of perennial color behind the 11th green. Photo by Joel Jackson.



Two of the five iguanas seen on the second hole at Westview. Photo by Joel Jackson.



This leaning remnant of an Australian pine is kept as reminder to insurance adjusters that there was a lot of damage during Hurricane Wilma. Photo by Joel Jackson.

I have tried to recruit other young superintendents in my age group, but they seem to be reluctant to step up and I'm sorry to say I really don't know why.

While earning his spurs and learning the ropes as a head superintendent, Bagwell has not just been taking from his peers without giving something back. This young superintendent has already put in more than four years on the South Florida GCSA board and has rotated through all the chairs from director to vice president. Look for Bagwell to become the next president of the South Florida Chapter at their annual meeting later this summer.

And to add to Bagwell's range of new experiences, the fact that he is the proud father of a six-month-old daughter Sarah. Says Bagwell, "So far Kathleen has been carrying most of the new baby load – feeding, changing, etc, but I know it won't be long before my life will change significantly as we get more involved as she grows up."

Bagwell is also an avid fisherman and scuba diver. His 25-foot boat is set up as a fishing machine, but it also has a small cuddy cabin so the family can get out of the weather when needed. In fact Bagwell was slated to attend a captain's meeting later that week for the Palm Beach GCSA's annual chapter fishing tournament. Fishing is almost universally a get-away activity of Sunshine State superintendents.

Since participation and volunteerism across the industry has been down in recent years I asked Bagwell if he had any insights into the problem. He said, "I have tried to recruit other young superintendents in my age group, but they seem to be reluctant to step up and I'm sorry to say I really don't know why." We surmised that lack of confidence in being away from the job site and worn-out excuse of not having

Fun Facts



Jason loves boating and fishing. Here he is with a sailfish caught off Costa Rica.

1. **Vehicle:** Ford F150 4x4.
2. **Last good movie I saw:** Wedding Crashers.
3. **I stay home to watch:** Golf Central.
4. **The book I've been reading:** *Life In and Out of The Rough* by John Daly.
5. **Favorite meal:** Steak and Florida lobster – on my grill.
6. **Favorite performers:** A dolphin (gamefish) on the end of my line.
7. **Prized possessions:** Our new daughter Sarah (6 months old).
8. **Personal heroes:** Tiger Woods.
9. **Nobody knows that I:** Can still ride a skateboard pretty well.
10. **I'm better than anyone else when it comes to:** Problem solving.
11. **I'd give anything to meet:** Jimmy
12. **My fantasy is:** Owning a yacht.
13. **The one thing I can't stand:** Golfers not obeying cart rules for the day.
14. **If I could change one thing about myself:** Take better care of my body.
15. **Most humbling experience:** Birth of my daughter.
16. **The words that best describe me:** Impatient.
17. **My dream foursome would be:** Mike Weir, Phil Mickelson, Tiger Woods and me.
18. **My best fish story:** Long before cell phones – getting dropped off with two friends for a 3-day hiking and trout fishing trip and forgetting my fishing rod in the car.

enough time were among the many reasons.

For Bagwell, it was obvious very early in his career that there was extraordinary value in attending superintendent meetings, conferences and trade shows. "Don't get me wrong, the formal education and speakers are good and necessary for PDI points, but what I learned just talking and networking

with other superintendents has been a fantastic education you can't get any other way. Meeting people who become friends and contacts in the business has been very worthwhile."

There's no question that most successful superintendents have had the support of their general manager, club president and green chairman. And the best of the best make sure they



Number 18 is a 525-yard, par 5. The majestic 82-year-old clubhouse in the background is a North Miami landmark. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

cultivate excellent working relationships with other department heads. For Bagwell, one of the key persons at Westview is the General Manager Louis Garcell, who has been at the club since 1976 when he started as a waiter. He is a consummate professional and he demonstrated his respect for his fellow employees as he rose through the ranks from waiter to maitre d' to assistant manager and eventually general manager.

Garcell has regular meetings with Bagwell to ensure all things are in order on the course, but he respects Bagwell's knowledge of turf management and allows him to do his job, which is tending to the golf course and clubhouse grounds.

By supporting Bagwell's involvement in superintendent meetings and association activities, Garcell is ensuring that Westview's superintendent will be in the company of the region's most successful turf managers and he will

stay on the leading edge of technology and information that can in turn help the club to be successful. It is not a new formula for success, but one that often seems to get lost in the shuffle at many clubs.

One example of how Westview gained an advantage by having an active superintendent was last year's decision not to overseed the golf course. Bagwell learned at meetings that more and more clubs were not overseeding and he presented the idea to his club. The main resistance to the idea came from golfers who really enjoyed seeing those striped fairways during the winter. But with the opportunity to save significant dollars in seed, labor, watering and chemical costs, the club agreed to give it a try.

Bagwell had his mowers burn-in the stripes by mowing the same pattern in the bermudagrass fairways until the stripes were established. With some of the savings from not overseed-

ing he purchased a fertigation system to spoon-feed the turf and keep the desired color during the winter season. Meanwhile the golfers were not inconvenienced by preparing the greens for seeding or the daily syringing to keep the seed damp during establishment. And in the spring, there were no thin greens or ragged looking fairways and roughs from transition. The experiment born out of networking conversations was successful and it was a win for all concerned.

Bagwell was happy to see that Westview took the big-picture view at his idea. He was also pleased to know that club has a history of longevity for most of its employees including former superintendents and certainly Garcell's tenure is almost legendary in country-club circles these days. With more new members joining the club, it's not a case of them having to learn the old ways as much as it is that everything old is new again. ■