



15th Hole

Par 4, 385 yards

Hobe Sound Golf Club

Photo by Daniel Zelazek



Hobe Sound Golf Club: **Florida History in the Making**

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

The Hobe Sound Golf Club is located on Florida's southeast coast midway between Stuart and Jupiter, just a quarter mile west of U.S. Highway 1 on Bridge Road. This neck of the woods along the east coast alternates between wetlands and sandy ridges flush with scrub oaks, sand pines, palmettos and slash

pinces, and the area is no stranger to me.

My dad was raised on the banks of the Loxahatchee River in Jupiter just a few miles south of Hobe Sound. Our family spent many summer and Christmas vacations visiting my grandparents and some of our side trips included the then-sleepy little town of Hobe Sound. When I was just a lad I, earned my Red Cross

Beginning Swimmer Card at the beachside pool at the eastern end of Bridge Road. Small world indeed, but I digress.

The history of Hobe Sound goes back much further than my youth... or my dad's. In fact the name Hobe Sound was derived from the Spanish word "Jobe" (pronounced Ho-BAY). Jobe (or Jove in English) was the supreme god in Roman



The par-five, 541-yard 16th hole is a dogleg around bunkers, woods and a lake. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

mythology. The Spaniards exploring the area gave the name to the Jupiter Inlet and the Seminole Indians inhabiting the area. Because the area encompassed the ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway, the word Sound was added later.

At the start of the 19th century when Spain controlled what later became Florida, the Spanish Governor Juan Estrada made a land grant of 12,180 acres to Don Eusabio Gomez which included the present-day Hobe Sound and Jupiter Island. The Gomez name appears today on many land parcels and roads. His descendents were living in the area as late as 1844 where they managed plantations growing sugarcane, coconuts and some citrus.

Control of Florida passed from Spain to the U.S. in 1819. A census in 1825 of all South Florida recorded only 317 persons. The

Gomez grant was purchased by a group of English investors 1892 who planned on raising pineapples and citrus but a big freeze in 1895 put an end to that venture. About this time the Florida East Coast Railway was established by entrepreneur Henry Flagler which permitted travel from Jacksonville to Miami. The portion from Jupiter to Juno Beach was called the Celestial Railway.

Hobe Sound was always a place for big dreams. In 1924 the Olympia Corporation purchased the Gomez Grant from the Indian River Association with plans to develop Picture City, the Hollywood of the East Coast, which would have housed 20,000 people involved in the motion picture business. The town center was laid out and subdivided, streets and sidewalks constructed and concrete lampposts erected. Remnants of this period are still visible in the center of

Hobe Sound. In 1926 a hurricane struck and dashed those dreams and the land boom, which began in 1922, collapsed. The name Olympia was changed back to Hobe Sound in 1929.

Fast forward to 1985 when the Hobe Sound Golf Club was created and founded by Ellis (Ted) Chingos, his brother John, and Charles Andromidas. Ted Chingos was a civil engineer and real estate developer. His brother was a building contractor and construction manager. Andromidas was an attorney with extensive real estate holdings and business interests in Florida. All three were avid, talented golfers and, aided by the expertise and advice of associates Morris Back, Sam Wax and William Manikas, the dream of building an exclusive residential golf community came to fruition.

Ted Chingos had worked with architect Joe Lee on the Indian Spring Club project and the group knew of

his work at Pine Tree and the Boca Resort. The developers made three important requests of Lee in the design of the course:

- Retain the naturalness of the terrain and create a topflight course suitable for private membership.
- Have the 9th and 18th holes return to the clubhouse.
- Keep the housing contained in one area.

In his book, *Gentleman Joe Lee, 50 Years of Golf Design*, author Ron Whitten wrote: "When he first saw the property for the Hobe Sound Golf Club, Joe called it one of the most unique pieces of ground he had ever worked on. Required to include only a limited residential component, Joe had the freedom to create one of his most natural layouts at Hobe Sound. Two years after it opened, *Florida Golf Magazine* ranked the course 35th among Florida's Top 50 golf courses.

Lee's approach to course design was pretty straightforward. "I like to build a course that rewards the player who knows how to make all the shots." But he kept all players in mind. "I start with the premise that golf should be enjoyable, not a chore." The landscape was all important to him and he had great respect for native vegetation. "If you listen, the land will tell you what to do. The vegetation will direct you. It can take years, but once you see it, you'll understand, that's what design is all about." The beauty of the site should



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Course Facts



Hobe Sound Golf Course Maintenance Staff.

Hobe Sound Golf Course

Location: Hobe Sound

Ownership: Member owned

Playing policy: Private. Guests must play with a member or be approved by one.

Holes/USGA rating: 18 holes. Championship tees 6,664 yards.

Rating/Slope: 73.1/143

Designed by: Joe Lee. Opened for play: 1988

Management Team: Club President Richard Maloof; Green Chairman, Tony Benincasa; Club Manager Marc Lucas; Head Golf Professional Tom Yeager; Golf Course Superintendent Roy MacDonald

Major Renovations/Ongoing Projects: In 2001 we hired Sanford Golf Design to consult on a major course renovation plan which started in 2002 and included installing a new irrigation system and regrassing the greens and tees. Green, tee and bunker complexes were also rebuilt and new cart paths were constructed.

Total acreage: 120 acres

Greens: TifEagle (2003). Average size 6,000 sq ft.; HOC .140 to .110 in.; Green Speeds: winter 9.5 – 10.5; summer 9.0 – 10.0; Member-Guest/Special events 10.5 – 11.5.

Tees: Tifway 419. HOC .450 - .600 in.

Fairways: Tifway II. HOC.525 - .650 in.

Roughs: Tifway II. HOC: Slopes 1.00 – 1.25 in. Deep rough 2.0 – 2.5 in.

Bunkers: 67 with 37M sand type.

Machine raked five or six times per week in season with Toro Sand Pro.

Native/Waste areas: 21 acres. Plant palette: Slash pines, sand pines, palmetto, Florida bay trees, Sand/scrub oaks. Upland areas are maintained in native condition as much as possible.

Waterways: 9.7 acres of lakes and 10.5 acres of wetlands. Both areas are under maintenance contracts for aquatic weeds and non-native plant material.

Irrigation: Source – deep well. Flowtronex PSI variable-frequency-drive pump station. Rain Bird Cirrus control system. 725 heads with 60-foot spacing around greens, 80-foot spacing in fairways and roughs. No current watering restrictions.

Staff: Total including superintendent is 18,13 full time and 5 part time. Total weekly man hours, 700 (650 straight time and 50 overtime.) Key personnel and years of service: Assistant Superintendent Mike Francisco (16); Assistant superintendent Mike Kindrew (6); Equipment Manager Justin Barreau (3); Assistant Equipment Manager Bud Mauthner (6); Chemical Tech Jeff Heward (2); Project Foreman Miguel T. Antonio (8); Lead Greenkeeper Fernando Alonzo (10)

Communications: Daily crew assignment meeting; Monthly safety videos and testing for entire crew; Monthly meeting with assistants and equipment manager to review tournaments, projects and special functions; Monthly Green Committee meetings (November to April); Monthly meetings with GM, head pro and food & beverage manager.

Cultural Programs: Greens – Core aerify 4x year, Hydroject 4-6x year, groomers or verticut weekly during summer (every other week in season), top dress 2-3x week in season. Annual fertility: 10-12 lbs of N; 20 lbs of P; 30 lbs of K. Tees – Core aerify and verticut 3x year, Fertility: 8 lbs of N, 10 lbs of P and 14 lbs of K per year. Fairways – Core aerify 3x year, verticut and scalp 3x year. Fertility: 5-8 lbs of N/P/K per year.

Pest Control/IPM: Rotate Chipco Choice every two years on fairways, tees and slopes and greens slopes. Curfew on 6-7 fairways as needed. All other turf areas are monitored for pest thresholds.

Wildlife inventory: Bobcat, fox, deer, raccoon, squirrels, wild pigs, bald eagle, sandhill crane, ducks, hawks, songbirds, wading birds, snakes, alligators, turtles and fish.

Turf management challenges: Sandy soil profile requires critical irrigation and nutrient management to maintain healthy turf to recover from divots, ball marks and foot and cart traffic.

aid rather than detract, in creating strategy for the course.” The golf course and clubhouse were completed in 1988-89.

In 2002 the members and residents assumed total control of club operations and the homeowners association. At that time the club retained the services of Sanford Golf Design to update the golf course. The objective was to retain and restore the original Joe Lee design concepts but also to upgrade the irrigation system, install new grass on the greens and restore the bunker complexes complete with new sand.

Like the founders of the club, superintendent Roy MacDonald is an avid golfer himself having won the Martin County Amateur Tournament in 1987 and the Poa Annua Classic in 1988. His golfing skills include an appreciation for the concepts that Joe Lee espoused in his mantra that golf should be enjoyable and not a chore. Says McDonald, “Joe Lee’s bunkers



Key personnel and years of service, from left: Project Foreman Miguel T. Antonio (8); Assistant Superintendent Mike Francisco (16); Lead Greenkeeper Fernando Alonzo (10); Assistant Equipment Manager Bud Mauthner (6); Assistant Superintendent Mike Kindrew (6); Chemical Tech Jeff Heward (2); Equipment Manager Justin Barreau (3). Photo by Joel Jackson.

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Native uplands and wetlands are a key part of the course. View from the 18th tee. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

were set up to guide your strategy as you play a hole. His bunkers were always there for a reason; not just a photograph.”

As Roy and I ride Hobe Sound, the course looks serene as it winds through the pines and palmetto uplands and skirts manmade lakes and native wetlands. There is evidence of Hurricane Wilma’s passage as a stump-grinding crew removes the remnants of trees that were victims of the storm’s winds. MacDonald said, “As we were hunkered down to ride out the storm, I had the portable radio on and heard a man from Belle Glade or Pahokee call in. He said, ‘Watch out. The backside of this hurricane is unbelievable!’” And so it was that Hobe Sound and points north of Stuart took their third major hit from a hurricane, counting Frances and Jeanne in 2004. But to the credit of

MacDonald and his staff, the course looked immaculate.

Only the locals would know what had changed on the course. There were plenty of changes made for the good of the course as the Sanford Design team worked with MacDonald in an aggressive program that started in 2002. That year a new variable-speed pump station, a Rain Bird Cirrus central control system and field satellites were installed. A new dual-head system was installed around the greens, giving MacDonald ultimate control of irrigating putting surfaces and greens slopes.

MacDonald has a combination electric/hydraulic control network with electricity running the face plates connected to an “irrigator manifold” which operates the hydraulic valves. New tubing was also installed in 2002.

With the irrigation system in

place, the greens were planted with TifEagle in 2003. All the tee and green slopes were replanted with Tifway 419. All bunker complexes were also rebuilt and the bunker slopes planted with 419. The entire practice facility was renovated, including new irrigation with hydraulic tubing and 125 new heads.

As if this weren’t enough for one year, MacDonald and company converted all asphalt cart paths to crushed rock surfaces. All exotic plant material was removed from the upland areas. They also moved 20 live oak trees some weighing as much as 10 tons. They excavated 20,000 yards of fill for the rebuilding of the tees and practice facility.

Last year, they enlarged the rear practice tee from 6,500 to 10,000 square feet, installed a new bulkhead at the 18th green, and added 3,000 lin-

Superintendent Facts



Roy MacDonald. Photo by Joel Jackson

Roy MacDonald

Originally From: Langhorne, Pennsylvania

Family: Wife Bonnie, son Mike

Employment History: 1997–present, superintendent Hobe Sound GC; 1988–1997 assistant GCS, Willoughby GC; 1982–1988 assistant GCS, Mariner Sands CC; 1980–1982 superintendent Bristol Golf Ranch, Bristol Pa.; 1968–1978 Langhorne CC, Langhorne Pa. At Langhorne CC I was exposed to all facets of the golf business. I learned at an early age that golf course maintenance was something I loved along with playing golf for free.

Professional Affiliations: Member of the Treasure Coast GCSA 1985–2005. I have held all levels of the board, including president from 2003–2005. Member of the FGCSA 1985–2005 and GCSAA 1987–2005

How did you get into the business?

Golf has always been a game the MacDonald family has played. My father taught my brother and me how to play golf at a very early age. Soon after we both could walk, we had golf clubs in our hands. My work ethic

most definitely comes from my mother and father — they both taught me about respect and to treat people the way you would like to be treated.

Who are some of your mentors? Two golf course superintendents who have had a major impact in my career are Dominic Fazio and Kevin Downing. I worked for Dominic at Langhorne CC and was given many responsibilities at an early age. Although I do seem to lose my temper once in a while, Dominic always was as cool as ice never seemed to lose it. I always respected that.

I worked under Kevin Downing at Mariner Sands and at Willoughby Golf Club as an assistant GCS. Although I am missing a three- or four-year degree from a university in my resume, working side-by-side with Kevin for 14 years was the best education I ever could have received.

Goals/Accomplishments: The renovation project in 2003 was a complete success and under budget. Serving as president of the TCGCSA. Looking back at the level of maintenance at Hobe Sound in 1997 when I first started, and comparing it to the level my staff and I maintain the golf course now, we have come a long way, baby!

Advice to prospective or new superintendents: It's a lot easier if you really love your job. I really love coming to work in the morning. I still have not figured out how to take weekends off. When things get tough, remember to leave work at work, shut the door to your office go home, work will be there in the morning.

Personal memorable moments: Meeting my wife Bonnie for the first time — she worked on the crew at Willoughby; winning the 1987 Martin County Amateur Golf Championship and 1988 Poa Annua Championship; our family trips to Hawaii, Nova Scotia and Maine — beer and lobster every night.

Hobbies and interests: Playing golf, kayaking, travel and family.

ear feet of cart path. They excavated an additional 2,500 yards of fill for projects; moved 1,000 linear feet of perimeter fencing and re-vegetated the new fence line.

This year they planted 200 trees to replace those damaged in the 2004 storms. Exacerbating the situation is that Hurricane Jeanne in '04 took off the maintenance shop roof and, with all the contractors and materials spread out so thin up and down the state, the roof wasn't repaired completely until February, 2005. So it has been a busy three years to say the least.

Superintendents across the state have been dealing with various combinations of projects and damage recovery the past two years, and it is only through patience, understanding, resources and teamwork that they and their courses emerge through it all.

MacDonald says he has an ace in the hole when it comes to his new general manager, Marc Lucas. Lucas, whose resume includes a stint as a PGA Tour caddy, came to Hobe Sound from Jack Nicklaus' Muirfield Village, and he and MacDonald have formed an effective team to meet the members' expectations under unusual circumstances, given Mother Nature's



General Manager Marc Lucas (left) and Superintendent Roy MacDonald have forged a strong working relationship at the Hobe Sound Golf Club. Photo by Joel Jackson.

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Fun Facts



Roy on the practice green just putting around. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Vehicle: 2005 Ram 1500 quad cab

Last good movie I saw: North Country

I stay home to watch: Penn State Football, English Premier League and Philly Sports.

The book I've been reading: The

Ben Hogan Story

Favorite meal: Any thing my wife cooks!

Favorite performers: Jimmy Buffet, Alan Jackson, John Prine

Prized possessions: My family

Personal Heroes: My father

Nobody knows that I: Would rather have been a professional soccer player

I'm better than anyone else when it comes to: Sending flowers to my wife.

I'd give anything to meet: Donald Ross

My fantasy is: Going to Hawaii for two weeks. Oh yeah. I did that this year.

The one thing I can't stand: Hurricanes

If I could change one thing about myself: I would be 20 pounds lighter since I turned 40

Most humbling experience: Getting Married

The words that best describe me: Dedicated, loyal fan from Philly "Go Birds!"

rambunctious habits lately. Lucas calls MacDonald "Philly" for his ardent support of all teams from Philadelphia, his original stomping grounds and when MacDonald counters with "What's a Buckeye?" Lucas says, "Just a useless nut!" They have a good working relationship that helps gets things done.

MacDonald believes in being prepared and not taking chances when it comes to renovation.

He said, "Just prior to our official aerification dates we will go out to the practice green and chipping green and do a dress rehearsal. I want everyone to get on the same page on the process — the sequence — and get used to handling the equipment and materials. I also want to see how the products and materials are going to react. The weather before, during and after is never the

same from year to year so I feel better checking the results to make sure our process is going to give us the results we want."

"Another practice we have adopted lately is to wait two or three days after topdressing before we do that first mowing. We get the greens aerified and cleaned up and then we apply the sand and then we roll, roll, roll. They are kept smooth enough to give a decent putting surface until the sand works into the canopy. It makes no sense to me to spend the time and money to top dress and then go out too soon and mow it up and tear up the reels to boot."

"Our challenge on the fairways and roughs is to try to stay as lean as possible, and time the fall fertilizer application to avoid feeding too early (too warm), causing extra mowing and clippings cleanup or applying



The number-one handicap hole (No. 4) at sunrise displaying a few of the 67 bunkers on the course. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

too late (too cold), and the turf may get thin and weak. As they say, timing is everything. The three hurricanes we have experienced have been a major challenge. Our weed-control programs have been affected due to the timing of the hurricanes, so in some cases we have been playing catch up.”

With only a small portion of the 240-acre property dedicated to home sites, MacDonald contracts out the maintenance of the upland areas to control and remove exotic non-native plants and also to monitor and clean up the wetland areas. Pine straw, cypress mulch and crushed rock are used as mulch to control weeds in high visibility and playability areas.

And speaking of playability, I mentioned earlier that MacDonald was an avid golfer. His love for the game and for the business was well founded as he comes from a golfing

family and his early work experience had him at the Langhorne CC owned and operated by the Fazio family. MacDonald earned his turf pedigree working under Dominic Fazio and Kevin Downing, who has been known to play a mean game of golf himself. MacDonald said, “Dominic gave me many responsibilities at an early age which gave me confidence and experience. Working with Kevin for 14 years gave me more education than I could have ever learned at a university.”

And now as MacDonald and his crew work and shape the land once known as “Hobay” they also become part of Florida’s history.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: I would like to acknowledge the “History of Hobe Sound” compilation by D. Craig, S. Day, D. Walsh and S. Wax given to me by the Hobe Sound Golf Club for this article. ■

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