



PHOTO BY JOEL JACKSON

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Dwight Kummer, host superintendent, and his staff had the course in top competitive condition as they overcame setbacks caused by a fire in the maintenance complex a few weeks before the Crowfoot Open.

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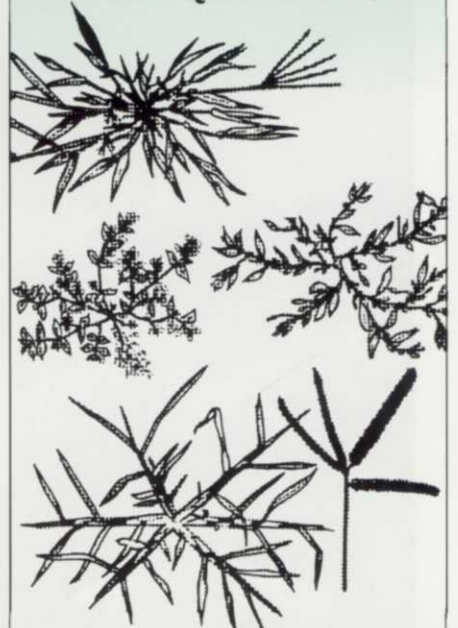
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**Mark Jarrell, CGCS
Palm Beach National
Golf and Country Club
in Lake Worth**

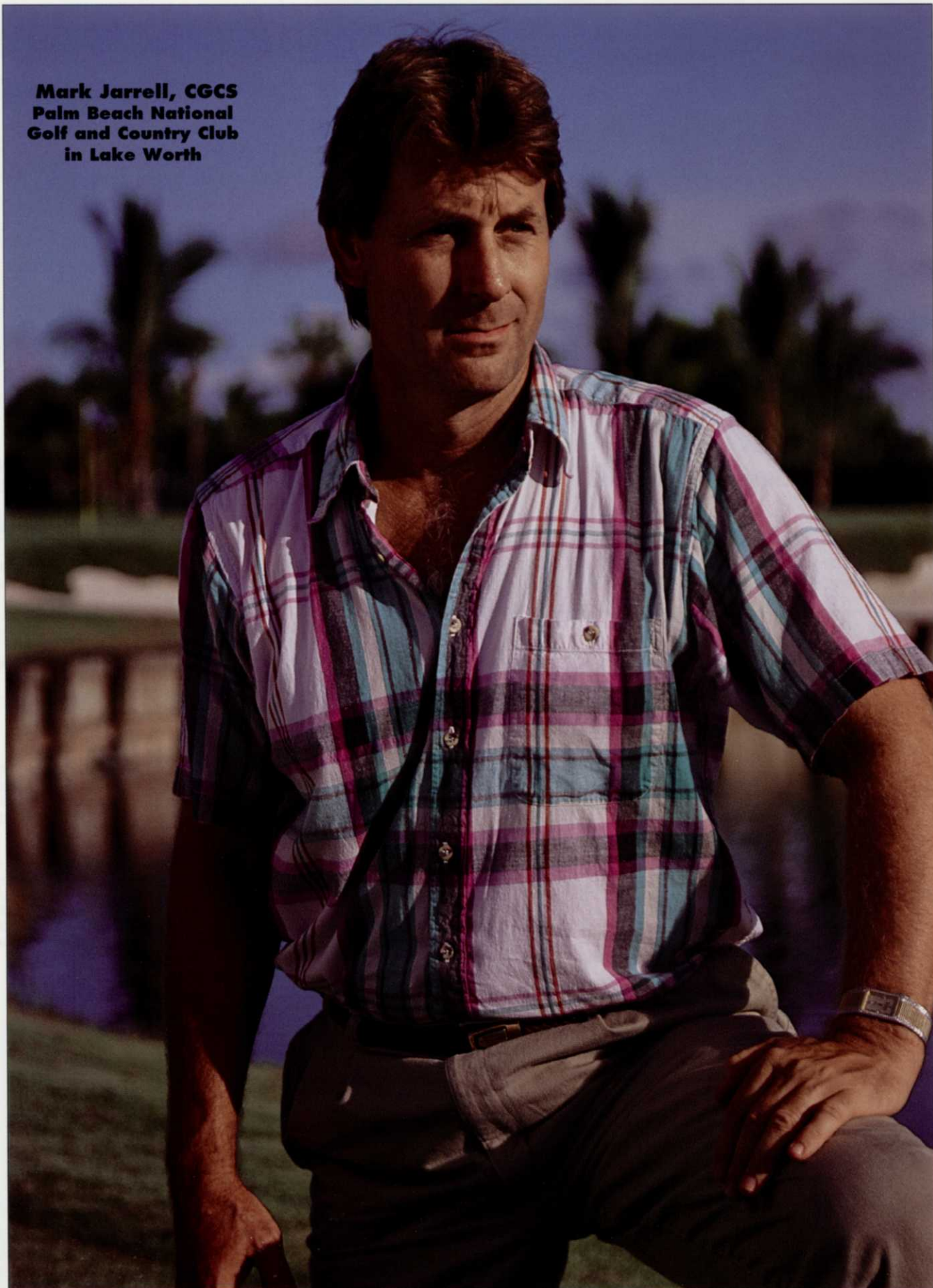


PHOTO BY DAN ZELAZEK



Number 3

PHOTO BY BRIAN EVERHART

‘You can put no price tag on feeling trusted and appreciated’

Palm Beach National Golf & Country Club

BY VICKI FORT

If you ask Mark Jarrell, CGCS, at Palm Beach National Golf and Country Club in Lake Worth, how many hours he works a day, what problems he faces on the golf course and whether he mows his own lawn or not, the answers will be similar to what any other superintendent would say.

But ask him what he does in his spare time, and the extent of his involvement



Thirteen years at the same address as golf course superintendent is quite unusual...

in golf industry-related activities and the answers will be exemplary in this world of golf and greens.

Although born in West Virginia, Jarrell can be considered a Floridian, having lived here 33 of his 41 years. He grew up in Lakeland and has lived at various times in Bartow, Orlando, Daytona Beach, New Smyrna Beach, and Gainesville, before moving to Lake Worth in 1979 as the superintendent of Palm Beach National.

Thirteen years at the same address as golf course superintendent is quite unusual. Jarrell attributes this to the unique ownership situation. Bob Rich, owner and founder of Rich Products Corporation of Buffalo, N.Y. has owned Palm Beach National since 1967. The club is operated as a branch of his corporate empire, but his and wife Janet's personal involvement creates a family atmosphere.

"Working for Mr. and Mrs. Rich is a pleasure and a privilege," says Mark. "There are no finer people on the face of the earth and you naturally want to do a great job for them. You can put no price tag on feeling trusted and appreciated, nor on the secure feeling that honest mistakes are accepted and won't cost you your job. How many superintendents can say the same about their jobs?"

Jarrell's initiation into the golf business came in 1969 when he joined the construction crew of Sugar Mill Country Club following his graduation from New

'you naturally want to do a great job for them'

Smyrna Beach High School. It was just a summer job to earn money for college, but it turned a light on in his head that eventually caused him to abandon his plans to become an architect.

He continued working at Sugar Mill as often as possible over the next three years as he pursued his education at Daytona Beach Junior College and the University of Florida. Most of the time he worked on the maintenance crew, but he also put in time behind the counter in the pro shop, as a nighttime security guard, and diving for golf balls in the ponds.

Mark graduated from the University of Florida in August, 1973, with a B.S. degree in Ornamental Horticulture, one of Dr. G.C. Horn's last turf students before his retirement.

"I learned more in one afternoon pulling weeds at the turf plots with Dr. Horn than I did in most of my classes," said Mark, fondly remembering his old professor who died in an auto accident in 1987.

Mark's first job after graduation was the nearby University Golf Club. Dr. Horn's recommendation secured him the job. "Good thing, too, because I was too poor to move out of town," quipped Jarrell.

The security of having Dr. Horn and his other professors minutes away if needed was also a factor in accepting this job—Mark had never held a supervisor's position and the thought of becoming a golf course superintendent at age 22 was a bit unsettling. "I really didn't have time to get nervous about it, though. I finished typing my 499 research project on Saturday and started to work on Monday."

After a year and eight months at the University club, Jarrell's old boss from Sugar Mill called to say the superintendent's position was open, and Mark returned to the course he helped build and maintain as its first formally trained golf course superintendent in April of 1975.

Sugar Mill was a Joe Lee-designed golf course and Jarrell got acquainted with the great man during the course of his visits. When politics made the Sugar Mill

Please see Page 15

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK JARRELL

Ten of the 20 greens on the Palm Beach National course were converted to Tifdwarf from contaminated Tifgreen. Mark really enjoys the reconstruction and does all the work in house. He does all the shaping himself with the boxblade and bunker rake.

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PHOTO BY MARK JARRELL

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— Mark Jarrell

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Mark really enjoys the reconstruction and does all the work in-house

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job unbearable. It was Joe Lee who paved the way for Mark to get the job at Palm Beach National. Lee had redesigned the front side at PBN in 1978 and had become steadfast friends with owner Bob Rich.

Jarrell said the hardest thing to deal with at the 31-year-old course is the inconsistency in conditions. "We have greens of varying ages, soil types, construction methods, and grass types. The original base greens grass was Tifgreen but contaminations in some of them are horrendous.

"Most of the fairways, tees, and roughs are a mixture of 419, Ormond, common, and who-knows-what. It is very difficult to develop a maintenance program to fit these conditions. Members don't want to hear that common bermuda doesn't do real well at $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch."

'He does all the shaping himself...'

The only solution for these problems is rebuilding and replanting and this is exactly what is taking place. In 1991 three greens were rebuilt and planted with Tifdwarf.

In 1992 the pace was accelerated and five greens were completed. This will bring the total to ten of the 20 greens on the course converted to Tifdwarf from contaminated Tifgreen. Mark really enjoys

the reconstruction and does all the work in-house. He does all the shaping himself with the boxblade and bunker rake. "At this rate, we should have pretty good putting surfaces throughout the course within two or three years."

Other handicaps include poor drainage, an antiquated irrigation system on the back side, and hundreds of "trash" trees like melaleucas, acacias, Florida hollies, and Australian pines. "I'd guess we spend \$50,000 or better each year on tree care or removal."

Jarrell's activism on behalf of superintendents is unsurpassed. He is currently the new president of the FGCSA, has been a member of the Florida Turfgrass Association for 20 years and a director for the past five years, and has written a monthly column on course management for *Golfweek* for more than eight years. ➔

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Number 2

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